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THE BRITISH INTELLECTUALS
Edward Shils

NO FLIES IN CHINA
George Stafford Gale

BULL FEVER
Kenneth Tynan

FOUR NEW ENGLISH OPERAS
William Glock

A VISIT TO THE DENTIST
William Sansom

A WORLD UNFIT FOR HEROINES: *David Sylvester*
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ENCOUNTER

APRIL 1955 VOL. IV, No. 4

Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER *and* IRVING KRISTOL

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This Month's *ENCOUNTER*:—

● WHAT is it about the English language that gives to the word "intellectual" an ever so fine, an ever so indelible, ironic complexion? Few proudly claim the term for themselves, but many are quick to apply it to others. And yet, it is not a "bad" word—it is not even a bad thing: the world is full of people who, in their heart of hearts, like to think of themselves as intellectuals.

Is this irony simply an expression of the inevitable contempt with which a materialistic, technological society views any anachronism—in this case, the idea that there is something elevated and noble about "humane learning," as it once was called? W. H. Auden seemed to be suggesting this when he remarked, in the pages of this magazine a few months ago, that in the company of scientists he felt like "a curate who has strayed into a drawing-room full of dukes."

Or is it a defensive, uneasy irony, reflecting the fear that the intellectuals in modern society are movers and shakers after all—that, in truth, they are no harmless figures of fun but a serious (perhaps even sinister) influence? This last sounds like a fanciful exaggeration; but it may be recalled that the late (and great) economist, Joseph Schumpeter, traced the decline of capitalism directly to the disaffection of the intellectuals; that Lenin regarded the intellectuals as the logical candidates for his organisation of "professional revolutionists"; and that the Nazi movement has been described by one of its most discerning historians as a gang of "armed bohemians."

This is all very controversial, of course, and as our contribution to the controversy we are presenting a series of articles on The Intellectuals. The first, on the British intellectuals, appears in this issue. It will be followed by essays on the American, the French, the German, the Japanese, the Russian, and the Indian. As a general rule, we have tried to have the articles written by "outsiders." Thus, Edward Shils, who writes on England, is an American; while Marcus Cunliffe, who will write on the U.S., is English. (As it happens, Mr. Shils has a British wife and Mr. Cunliffe an American one—but that was not a part of our editorial programme.)

Edward Shils is Professor of Social Thought at the University of Chicago. He has taught for extended periods at the London School of Economics and the University of Manchester, thereby gaining a first-hand acquaintance with that tendency he describes of British intellectuals to move from a position of "alienation" to a state of reconciliation with British society and particularly with its "aristocratic-gentry" component. We expect that some readers will wish to take issue with Professor Shils, while others may desire to elaborate on his analysis out of their own experience. We urge such readers to write—requesting only that they limit their communications to a maximum of 500 words.

● IT is probably not true that the quantity of nonsense that manages to get written varies significantly from year to year, or from decade to decade. One is always tempted to think so, especially to the disadvantage of one's own contemporaries. And the temptation is understandable. But, as we say, it is probably not true.

There is, for instance, a great deal of rubbish being written about China, both by people who have been there and by people who haven't. Upon examination, the amount would surely turn out to be no greater than that written about America, France, Germany, or India. If one is unduly impressed (and depressed) by it, this is because it is hardly compensated for by any corresponding quantity of sensible writing of a kind which one can find about these other countries. The explanations are various and plausible: China is big, (Communist) China is new, access is difficult and so is the language, etc. Nevertheless, they are not entirely convincing. They might explain why Mr. Aneurin Bevan wrote silly articles on his return from China. They do not explain why Mr. Sam Watson wrote intelligent ones. The

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task, it would appear, might be difficult but it is not superhuman. Certainly George Stafford Gale did not find it so.

When the Labour Party's delegation visited China last year, Mr. Gale accompanied them as correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*. Readers of that newspaper will recall with pleasure his witty and perceptive dispatches, and will look forward with anticipation to his book, *No Flies in China*, which gives a more complete account of his experiences. This book will be published shortly by Allen and Unwin, and we are pleased to have secured for advance publication the excerpts presented in this issue.

● KENNETH TYNAN'S amusing and instructive essay on bullfighting has nothing to do with either British intellectuals or Chinese Communists so far as we can see—except insofar as it distracts attention from both intellectuals and Communists, and directs it towards bulls. This is an agreeable diversion, we should all concede (though some will doubtless argue that it can hardly be counted a diversion at all!). Mr. Tynan, who is drama critic for *The Observer*, has written an entire book on bullfighting, of which this chapter forms a part. It will be published in the near future by Longmans, Green.

● WILLIAM SANSOM is one of the few writers we know who, slipping round the conventional literary themes, successfully applies himself to the *condition humaine* of the second half of the 20th century. In this month's ENCOUNTER, he contributes a tale of false teeth. So far as we know, it is the first real story written about this engrossing subject. Mr. Shils claims, in his essay on the British intellectuals, that "William Sansom treats Suburbia because its dull placidity is an excellent foil for diabolism," and there is doubtless some truth in this. But to the extent that life is sometimes hell for all of us, diabolism might not be far from realism. It is certainly not far from the dentist's chair.

NOTES ON OTHER CONTRIBUTORS:—

ALAN ROSS has published some books of verse and is the author of several travel books. He is also cricket correspondent of *The Observer*. . . . WILLIAM GLOCK is the editor of the musical periodical, *Score*. . . . HERBERT LUTHY, whose articles on France have appeared in previous issues of ENCOUNTER, is a Swiss ournalist-historian who lives in Paris. His recent book, *Frankreichs Uhren gehen anders* (an English translation is now under way), has been acclaimed on the Continent as a classic of modern French historiography. . . . DAVID SYLVESTER, an art critic by vocation and a film critic through temptation, writes regularly in both fields for ENCOUNTER. . . . VINCENT BUCKLEY, one of Australia's leading younger poets, is Senior Tutor of English at Melbourne University. . . . KINGSLEY AMIS, Lecturer in English at University College, Swansea, is the author of a celebrated first novel, *Lucky Jim*. We shall publish a new long story by him in an early issue. . . . JOHN MORRIS is Director of the Third Programme. . . . ANTHONY QUINTON is a fellow of All Souls, Oxford. . . . FRANCIS HUXLEY is keeper of Ethnography at the Liverpool City Museum and has studied the Urubu Indians in Brazil.

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Edward Shils

The Intellectuals

1. Great Britain

Blimps and Dissidents

WHEN Basil Seal joined the Commandos, Sir Joseph Mainwaring, an old Blimp, said, "There is a new spirit abroad. I see it on every side," and Evelyn Waugh, who was himself invaded by the new spirit, closed the book with the words: "And poor booby, he was bang right."

He was bang right. It was the end of two decades of rebellion against society, against the middle classes, against capitalism, against British institutions and manners. Even as the period came to an end, one of England's most brilliant poets, perhaps the leading figure of his generation, renounced his country and took up residence in America. There went with him one of the more talented writers of the period. Earlier, two of the most esteemed writers of the twenties, Aldous Huxley and D. H. Lawrence, had already expatriated themselves, one to California, the other wandering restlessly until his death. Other eminent British writers, e.g. Norman Douglas, Richard Aldington, Robert Graves, *et al.*, found life at home unsatisfactory and preferred to live abroad. English writers were on the move: travel books became a category of literature with a new intellectual significance. Who had a good word to say then for Britain among the intellectuals? Who had a good word then to say for British towns, where "every street (was) a blow, every corner a stab"; or for the British countryside and for English village life—those scenes of harsh inequality, of social snobbery and death-bringing gossip? "England's Green and Pleasant Land" was the façade of iniquity, and the British past was an elaborate pretence.

T. S. Eliot was still the poet of those who felt contemporary England to be a waste land. Graham Greene, whose specifically political interests had died very soon after their birth, portrayed a seedy, peeling, sinister, violent and treacherous England, an England without faith and without order, while Evelyn Waugh's England was a contemptibly irresponsible, frivolous land in which silliness ruled. E. M. Forster was not much of a revolutionary but his three cheers for friendship and his devotion to "love, the Beloved Republic" took their place—a more refined place, to be sure—in the general alienation from institutions and traditions.

The capitals of the intellectuals' ideal commonwealths varied. For some it was Moscow, which held the hearts of more than members of the Communist Party; for others, it was Baghdad, or Paris, or Berlin, or Los Angeles—it was in any case not London. It was certainly not Manchester or Bristol or Liverpool or Glasgow. It might be in some other period or it might be in the realm of the imagination; it

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was certainly not in 20th century Britain. A dreary country, ruled by an "old gang," by philistines and middlebrows, where the muse lay dying or in chains—who could give his heart to it?

The thirties was the time of the Left Book Club, whose authors seized any stick with which to beat the British dog, and every pretext to announce its death; it was the time of *In Letters of Red*, of *Fact*, of *The Coming Struggle for Power* and *Forward from Liberalism* and of the powerful movement of Marxism in British science. The London School of Economics was at the height of its reputation as a fountain of radical criticism of British life and institutions, as well as a mine of scholarship. The hatred of British society was not a matter simply of the fervent revolt of adolescence and youth, nor was it just a criticism of particular aspects of British life while leaving the whole untouched.

Indeed, even when he loved his cottage, or his Regency house, or some little spot of English soil, the intellectual's love of Britain was overshadowed by a feeling of repugnance for its dreary, unjust, and uncultured society, with its impotent ruling classes and its dull and puritanical middle classes. It was not particular institutions or attitudes that were repellent but the whole notion of Britain or of England. This was not just the view of the Communists or the æsthetes. It was the view of nearly everyone who in the 1920's and 1930's was considered worthy of mention in intellectual circles in Great Britain.

The pattern of alienation by no means covered all parts of the intellectual class—nor were the alienated uniformly and equally alienated. The Civil Service was not swept off its feet nor the whole of the journalistic world, nor every one in the universities, new and old. Nonetheless, the prevailing attitude, in quantity and emphasis, was one of alienation. Divergence from this view was a sort of disqualification for being taken seriously. *The Times* and *The Times Literary Supplement* were the stuffy representatives of a deadening official culture, a writer like Arnold Bennett was as contemptible as a businessman. Those who were still proud of their country or who invoked its history and traditions were dismissed as Blimps.*

Rediscovering the Old School Tie

Look at the British intellectuals now. Could anything be less like what I have just described? How rare has become the deeply critical voice. Not long ago I heard an eminent man of the Left say, in utter seriousness, at a University dinner, that the British Constitution was "as nearly perfect as any human institution could be," and no one even thought it amusing. Who criticises Britain now in any fundamental sense, except for a few Communists and a few Bevanite irreconcilables? There are complaints here and there and on many specific issues, but—in the main—scarcely anyone in Great Britain seems any longer to feel that there is anything fundamentally wrong. On the contrary, Great Britain on the whole, and especially in comparison with other countries, seems to the British intellectual of the mid-1950's to be fundamentally all right and even much more than that. Never has an intellectual class found its society and its culture so much to its satisfaction. Is it conceivable that any British literary periodical—of the few that now survive—would have the audacity to publish, as *Horizon* did about ten years ago, a series on "Where Should John Go?" in which the young Briton, bored and fed up with his country, had surveyed for him the wide range of possible places to which he could emigrate? (But even at that moment Mr. Connolly was already out of touch with the times—has not Mr. V. S. Pritchett recently attributed to him a mid-19th-century Bohemianism?)

The post-war years, it is true, tarnished the patriotic enthusiasm of 1944 and 1945 for the new Britain. Socialism turned out to be less than some had hoped it would be, others found it more than they cared for. The merciless appetite of the Inland Revenue is complained about on all sides but it is not accused of injustice, and the public and the welfare services which

* The chief admirers of British institutions during most of this period were the Germans, who found in England the ideal of the Christian gentleman and an austerely responsible aristocratic governing class.

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impel its action are not assailed in principle, even by their severest critics. The arbitrary and inflexible rulings of bureaucracy have given rise to a little restiveness and the unforthcomingness of many of the beneficiaries of the bounties of the Labour Government has caused sardonic disgruntlement and crankiness. But criticism of the comprehensive schools from one side, of the American alliance in foreign policy from the other, and of many more details, from all sides, never give the impression of a deeply penetrating cleavage or withdrawal. Fundamental criticism of the trend of British society has become rare. Whereas in the interwar period, Wyndham Lewis was distinguished only by his talent and his violence of expression and not by his fundamental negation of society, now he is a rare bird.

The British intellectual has come to feel proud of the moral stature of a country with so much solidarity and so little acrimony between classes.

The disapproval of public school culture—long a stock in trade—still crops up from time to time, but it is no longer of serious concern to either side. The public schools have stealthily crept back into the hearts of the intellectuals where they repose more securely and more vitally than ever before. To cite only one of many examples, not long ago the *New Statesman and Nation*, in response to a recommendation by one of the younger M.P.s for the abolition of the Public Schools by legislative action, replied that they represented quality and not just privilege. It was not even embarrassed to say that "even the conscientious socialist with a little money is forced to send his child to a private school or to face the self-criticism that he has sacrificed his chances in life to a political prejudice. The "old school tie" has ceased to be an accusation of British injustice; it is now taken as evidence of British quality.

Even India, that ancient sore on the conscience of the forward-looking, has become in retrospect a credit to Britain. Philip Woodruff's work on *The Men Who Ruled India* is everywhere and rightly acclaimed, but one is struck by the reviewer's tone of national self-congratulation for having produced such a class of men capable of ruling with such justice and humanity. Practically everyone agrees that it was proper to have withdrawn from India; at the same time, there seems to be no question at all that the British Raj itself was something very great indeed—the very extreme opposite of that cause for shame which it was once alleged to be by the liberal intellectuals.

When, in 1942, the late George Orwell rehabilitated Kipling against the unjust denigration of "pansy-left circles" and praised him in particular for his identification with the official classes and for his sense of responsibility for the maintenance of an orderly society, it was clear that one of the extreme positions was being evacuated. Another had been evacuated from the other side in the previous year, when the poet of *The Waste Land* took on himself the task of reasserting the merits of that same "vulgar apologist" of imperialism.

While the welfare state has raised the floor of British society, the symbols of hierarchy and authority have found increasing acceptance. Do the fifties have anything to match the refusal of a peerage by one of the greatest intellectuals of the twenties and thirties, reported in Dr. Thomas Jones's correspondence? On the contrary, it can show an avowed anarchist and an ardent exponent of the *avant garde* in art and literature accepting a knighthood.

What has brought the intellectuals back to the nation? What has made them with all their complaints and grievances, conscious and proud of being British? What has put them at ease with the symbols of sovereign authority? Why have they come once more to appreciate British institutions? What has produced this extraordinary state of collective self-satisfaction?

II

As SIR JOSEPH MAINWARING sensed, it was with the war that the new spirit began. It was, however, really not a beginning. It was rather a renewal. The cranky antinomianism of the twenty years between the wars was more like a digression from the main course of the British intellectual class in its relations with British institutions. The intellectuals in the first half of the 19th century had never been

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as revolutionary, as æsthetic, as anti-bourgeois, as anti-political, as hostile to the symbols of authority as their opposite numbers on the Continent. There had been lots of criticism and disagreement in the second half of the century, but the union of the intellectuals with the Civil Service, the Church, the Houses of Parliament, the Press, and the leadership of the political parties, through the ancient universities primarily, but also through kinship and through the social and convivial life of London upper-class society, constituted a bond from which few could escape and which no other country could then or has since matched. Neither socialism nor the æsthetic revolt of the turn of the century ever bred a doctrine or practice of complete alienation. Many of the major figures in the twin, sometimes separate, sometimes joint, revolts of art and justice, were outsiders—Irishmen mainly. The British intellectuals might have appeared dull to the Continental firebrands and gypsies but they were dutiful and loyal.

This residual loyalty which had been beaten down by the rancour of rebelliousness, this civility which had been suppressed by æsthetic disdain, had been lying in wait all through the inter-war period to be summoned back to ascendancy. It was embarrassing at first for many to perceive within themselves the stirring of national sentiments against which they had earlier set their faces and the denial of which had indeed been central to their outlook. Richard Hillary was one of the first to record his return to the bosom of the nation. He was not describing himself alone when he told of how anomalously uneasy he felt to act in the service of the symbols of a society which he had rejected and to which, despite his conscious rejection, he became aware of a genuine attachment below the surface.

Unlike the First World War of 1914–18, there was no butchery from thoughtlessness in the Second; there was boredom but there was little waste of human life in aimless large-scale military operations. Two of the most eminent British generals of the 1939–45 war were renowned for their humane concern for their troops. The purblind unimaginativeness which sacrificed so many young men's lives in the First World War, and which contributed so mightily to the greatest alienation of the British intellectuals from civil society in the entire history of Great Britain, was absent in the Second World War.

Furthermore, the war against Nazism and Fascism made a little more sense to the newly-ideological intellectuals, who were thus enabled more easily to disregard the suspect influence on their conduct of considerations of national interest and national loyalty. The alienation of the twenties and thirties was an alienation from the primordial institutions. It was an alienation from kinship, from tradition of tribe and land, from the established church and the civil state—all in the name of life in accordance with principles freely chosen. It was a smoother passage to return to the objects of primordial attachment through what seemed to be a war for principles.

Then, too, the war gave much more for intellectuals to do as intellectuals. Not only the scientists but the historians, economists, linguists, the philosophers, and other scholars, found hospitality in official circles, in the Cabinet Offices, in the Ministry of Information, in the Political Warfare Executive, in the BBC, in Military Intelligence, in the War Office Selection Boards, etc. These and others provided an appreciative audience for the intellectuals in their intellectual capacities—and it contrasted very sharply with the intellectual's image of official anti-intellectualism of the period between the wars. British society too seemed to become more cultivated during the war. The Committee for the Encouragement of Music and Arts—the parent of the Arts Council—the concerts in the National Gallery, the increase in the sale of books and some corresponding increase in their reading, the flowering of discussion circles even under official auspices, as in ABCA and the National Fire Service, facilitated the growth among the intellectuals of the idea that the country was not hostile to them.

The Blurring of Ideologies

Of at least equal importance was the fact that the Government during the war,

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despite inefficiencies and errors, gave the appearance of being just.

The WOSB was a direct refutation of the old complaint by outsiders and rebels that the Public School system, in the words of Captain Grimes, "never lets one down." It disregarded breeding, accent, and background and concentrated on what was necessary for the effective performance of the duties of the officer. Rumours, true or untrue, that Lord So and So's nephew or Sir This and That's son had been unable to meet the requirements of the Selection Board contributed to the impression that considerations of inefficiency and justice had penetrated into a sphere which had hitherto been reserved for the Old Guard. The system of officer selection in the Second World War helped to dissolve some of the rancour against antebellum Britain.

No one seemed to be getting rich out of the war, and the nearly universal discomfort, squalor and poor food were equated with virtue. There were black marketeers, but they were not seen as products of the moral deficiencies of the ruling class, and society was not to be blamed for them. Many thought they were foreigners.

The magnanimous wartime figure of Mr. Churchill, above parties and especially above the old gang of vulgar businessmen, bloated Tories, and exploiting imperialists, was a reassurance that bourgeois Britain would not come back into the saddle after the war. The victory of the Labour Party at the polls in 1945 was a further reassurance that intellectuals could continue to regard Britain as their own country, where, in union with civil servants, they could either rule or feel themselves intimately affiliated with those who ruled. Mr. Attlee, with his background in a professional family, his Oxford education, his respectable military record, and his almost exaggerated restraint in speech and attitude, kept the conservative intelligentsia from alienation, however much they disliked the expected consequences of some of the policies of his government. On the other hand, the mere incumbency of the Labour Party in the seats of authority reconciled many of its intellectual members, who were disgruntled on specific issues, to the society against which their doctrine and principles logically aligned them.

Responsibility, through their party, for the fortunes of the country curbed the oppositional mentality. Such responsibility at a time when the country seemed to be declining in power in the world, and to be in great economic trouble as well, reinforced the curb. The latent patriotism which had been partially suppressed when the country appeared safe and powerful came back to the surface of consciousness when the country was threatened. Those who had ridiculed and abhorred patriotism began to find themselves patriots. The emancipation of India, Burma, and Ceylon, which politically-minded Leftist intellectuals had sought so long, had many repercussions. The feeling of being without an empire, a feeling of being bereft of something, a feeling of loss, enhanced the sense of national identity. Also, the nation seemed to be cleaner and more worthy of being embraced when it was divested of its immoral imperial appurtenances. Little Englanders could feel more comfortable in such a country and could love it more easily, and they could embrace its past without feeling that its present disgraced them.

Then, too, there was America. From a harmless, amiable, good natured, powerful, ridiculous, loyal ally—a sort of loutish and helpful nephew—it suddenly seemed to develop into a huge challenging empire, wilful, disregarding Britain, criticising Britain, lording it over Britain, and claiming to lord it over everyone everywhere. Loyal British backs were arched at this peril, and the terrible economic crises of the second half of the forties accentuated impatience with America. Patriotism in this atmosphere was nurtured by anti-Americanism.

Animosity against naïve, boorish, and successful America heightens the gratification which British intellectuals derive from their national self-contemplation.

On the Continent, in the years after the war, France went without governments, and Italy and Germany were in ruins, the rich ate well, the poor rummaged in dustbins—and that too enhanced British self-esteem. Whereas in the great days of the Empire, imperialistic Britons thought Britain should be tutor to the world

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by active teaching, and the intellectuals denounced such arrogance, now former anti-imperialists began to think of Britain as a model commonwealth, a paragon of how to do things without corruption, with public spirit, with a sense of responsibility, with respect for the past and an openness towards the future, free from ideological fanaticism, and without ambitions of self-aggrandisement. This imaginative self-transformation into an ideal commonwealth was fed by and made for patriotism.

There is another factor too in this process. Although the war, for the previously alienated intellectuals, had been a war of principle, the war itself, and the course of events in Britain and in the world at large since then, marked a downward path for ideology. As I have just said, the rediscovery of national sentiments in the wartime experience, and partly the state of siege in which Britain lived during most of the postwar decade, focussed attention and feeling on the symbols of the nation. Symbols of party and class lost some of their power. Abroad and at home, meanwhile, an almost complete evaporation of the basis for a doctrinal socialism was occurring.

British socialism has never been doctrinaire —except for inconsequential corners—and the vicissitudes of governing and the achievement of many of their most tangible goals had made it even less so. The practical conservation by the Conservative Government of most of Labour's innovations has helped to blur the edges of the socialist ideology. The extremes of planning or of *laisser-faire* are not espoused in Britain today by very many intellectuals. There are still a few extremists who would underscore the differences, but for the most part there is not a wide difference between the intellectual proponents of liberalism and socialism. The differences are, moreover, not made into differences in fundamentals, in *Weltanschauung*, and a consensus of matter-of-factness has settled over most discussions of economic policy. The main direction of present-day British political philosophy is to emphasise the inarticulate and inarticulatable wisdom of institutions and traditions, and to delimit the power of man to control events through the strength of his reason and the power of his organisations.

As a result of this evaporation of ideology, and of socialist ideology in particular, the range of dispersion of the British intellectuals has been much narrowed. Without a doctrine which they can espouse, the handful of extremists are forced to confine their extremism to mood and disposition and to express it *ad hoc*. They can scarcely form a sect on such a basis.

One more factor may be mentioned—the fostering of cultural institution by public authority. How can a society which maintains the Third Programme, the Arts Council, the British Council, etc., with their numerous opportunities for the employment of intellectuals, be regarded as lacking in sympathy for intellectual things? On the contrary, such a society arouses the intellectual's appreciation as well as giving him a sense of responsibility for its support.

III

THERE is, however, something deeper than this. It is the vindication of the culture associated with the aristocracy and gentry, and its restoration to pre-eminence among the guiding stars of the intellectuals. It is a change which is not confined to the intellectuals. All English society has undergone this process of submission to the moral and cultural—but not the political or economic—ascendancy of the aristocracy and gentry.

For nearly a century, the culture of the aristocracy and gentry was in retreat. When their political power and their privileges were increasingly restricted and their economic strength damaged by American and Australian agriculture and the legislation of pre-1914 Liberalism, their cultural power too seemed to be broken. It had been subjected to fierce criticism by the intellectuals. Nineteenth-century radicalism, the æstheticism of the end of the century and after, the diversified and penetrating denunciation of H. G. Wells, John Galsworthy, D. H. Lawrence, and G. B. Shaw made people distrustful of class privilege, of snobbery, of elaborate etiquette, of the display of power.

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In contrast, bourgeois culture—the culture of the business classes—seemed slowly and steadily on the upgrade in the 19th century, both in London and the provinces—especially in the provinces. As long as Dissent lived in inner exile, excluded from the ancient universities, and excluded therefore from the opportunities to which those universities gave access, as long as it was shunned by the gentry and nobility because it was "in trade" or manufacture, its culture maintained a high intensity in both its religious and secular forms. After or alongside of money-making it made the improvement of civic life its concern; it founded literary and philosophical societies, libraries, and above all, through its own benefactions and through the local government which it controlled, it raised its chief monuments, the modern universities—to show that it too, even though excluded and thought barbarous, could pursue truth and glorify the dingy cities in which its money was made. Living to itself, puritanical, pharasaical, proud, and excessively sensitive to the slights and denials of the traditional society, the bourgeoisie of the big provincial towns, partly from local patriotism, partly from resentment, partly from a love of learning, created, before their submission, a genuine civilisation—earnest, searching, and profound. Matthew Arnold, Ruskin, Carlyle, and the other great critics of the Victorian bourgeoisie which was dissenting and provincial, did less than justice to their victims.

However that may be, the businessman's Dissenting culture of the 19th and early 20th centuries—the culture which founded the modern universities, the musical and literary institutions of the provinces—has now been routed. Sons sent to Oxford or Cambridge, or into the Army as professional officers, themselves removed southward and Londonward, the Chapel renounced for the Church—these are the signs of the surrender of the British bourgeoisie to its upper-class antagonists.

The London – Oxford – Cambridge Axis

THE movement towards London in the twenties and thirties was not merely a demographic fact. It was associated with the assertion of the cultural supremacy of London society—and with it, of Oxford and Cambridge—over the provincial centres.

The aristocratic-gentry culture has now come back into the saddle, and with little to dispute its dominion. The twenties and thirties which did it so much damage, did even more damage to the provincial bourgeois culture. The rebellion of the intellectuals was rather against bourgeois culture than against the aristocratic-gentry culture. The latter never abdicated. Some of its offspring might revolt against it, but they could not find anything to substitute for it except Bohemianism and an utterly spurious proletarianism, both completely unviable. Bourgeois culture on the other hand, as soon as it came freely into contact with aristocratic-gentry culture, lost its self-esteem and its spiritual autonomy. It could not win the youth, even those brought up in its own atmosphere. It seemed paltry and mean alongside aristocratic-gentry culture.

This is not relevant solely to the description of the class structure of contemporary Britain. It has the most significant consequences for the development of the British intellectuals because the change in the status and self-esteem of the classes was paralleled by changes in the status and self-esteem of the cultural institutions patronised by the classes. I shall illustrate with reference to the relations between the ancient and the modern universities.

The modern British universities, which in scholarship and science take second place to none in the world, have—despite efforts of the University Grants Committee and many worthy men who have loved them—been belittled in their own eyes. They have never had a place in that image of the right life which has evolved from the aristocratic, squirearchal, and higher official culture. To those who accept this image, modern universities are facts but not realities. They would not deny that Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, and the other urban universities actually exist and yet they do not easily admit them to their minds. Oxford and Cambridge are thought of spontaneously when universities are mentioned. If a young man, talking to an educated stranger, refers to his university studies, he is asked "Oxford or Cambridge?" And if he says

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Aberystwyth or Nottingham, there is disappointment on the one side and embarrassment on the other. It has always been that way.

True, very many more persons are now factually aware of the modern universities than, say, thirty years ago. They have established themselves as bulwarks of research in science and scholarship, and without them Great Britain would be poorer in every respect. Nonetheless, fundamentally, the situation has scarcely improved. It has perhaps become even worse. The deterioration is revealed in the diminution in self-esteem which these universities have undergone among their own staff, graduates, and patrons.

The modern universities have by no means declined in relative intellectual statute. On the contrary, in some subjects the modern universities now take the lead. The differences in prestige, however, have probably been accentuated. There is less contentment now in being in a modern university than there used to be. It is becoming more difficult to get first class younger men to leave Oxford and Cambridge —and London—for professorships in the provincial universities, however superior the traditions of the chair to be filled. It is more difficult to keep young men in the provinces; they are less contented with the prospect of a career in one of the great provincial universities, and look on them instead as jumping-off places, as places where they can keep alive and wait until something better comes along. They are moreover even quite open in disclosing their motives, as if that were and always had been quite the normal thing. And the writers of the present day who are setting out to show the humanity and vitality of provincial life—particularly Mr. William Cooper, Mr. Kingsley Amis, and Mr. John Wain—do not their heroes, on their different levels of talent, find their appropriate salvation in Oxford and London? Does not Dr. C. P. Snow's chronicle of the world of Lewis Eliot move southward and reach its plateau in the professional class in London and Cambridge, where over sunlit polished tables on which stand old silver milk jugs, few appear to do any hard work and all live graciously and spaciously?

IV

THE internal unity of the British élite has often been remarked. The re-establishment of amicable and harmonious relations between the intellectuals and British society has really been the unification of the intellectuals with the other groups of the ruling élite; it has been a resumption of friendly relations with the Government, with the Houses of Parliament and the Civil Service, and with the complex of institutions around the central institutions of authority, the Law Courts and the Inns of Court, the Church of England, the ancient Universities, etc.

The culture which has now regained moral ascendancy is not an aristocratic culture in the sense that it is the present culture of an active aristocracy, nor is it the actual culture of the gentry. It is the culture traditionally inspired by those classes, the culture appropriate to certain institutions allied to these classes. Many of the aristocracy and gentry are quite ignorant and boorish but when they become cultivated, their culture takes that tone: moderate, unspecialised and unobsessed, civil, restrained, diversified and personally refined.

It is a pluralistic culture within itself: it has room for politicians, for sportsmen, for travellers, for civil servants and judges and barristers and journalists, for artists and writers of different persuasions. It is an un-bourgeois culture, even though members of the bourgeoisie and their offspring people it most densely. It is an exclusive culture into which the rest of the society is rarely admitted except on the terms of the host. The "insideness" of the British élite is part of a great social machine for creating "outsiders." Its internal unity is intimately related to the tangibility of its external boundaries.

Their conquest, like all conquests, is incomplete. It has left under the surface of the conquered a mass of sentiments and loyalties and suspicions which are far from dissolved. For years, the division of British society—on the one side, the society of the aristocracy and gentry and their allied institutions, and, on the other the Dissenting bourgeois with their provincial, modern society—rendered possible and even easy the public expression of the

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cultural aspirations and social and æsthetic sensitivity of "the other nation." The reconquest by aristocratic-gentry culture has rendered this expression more difficult, just as it has obscured the persistent and effective division of the nation and given a spurious impression of unity. Among the British intellectuals there are thickly scattered Judes and Leonard Basts and Bruce Truscotts, experiencing with distress, while hating to acknowledge, the line which separates them from the inside, from the charmed circle of cultivation, affluence, worldliness, and ease.

Earlier there was rivalry and even antagonism between the two nations of British culture but there was little emulation. The bourgeoisie was too concerned with the intrinsic importance of its own cultural and philanthropic works, and too apprehensive of rebuff to worry itself profoundly about its conformity with the standards of the aristocracy and gentry. Indeed, the mere notion that the aristocracy and gentry prized one way of doing things led the business classes to follow another path. The small class of clerks, shop assistants, and self-educated workmen were not sufficiently in contact with, or near to, the uppermost classes in the social hierarchy to be substantially affected by their standards. When they studied at night it was from sheer love of learning or to advance themselves in the knowledge required for progress in their own occupations.

The intellectual's desire to move in the aura of the aristocratic-gentry culture is only about half a century old—its first distinguished representative in the 20th century was Leonard Bast and only in the 1930's did such young people become noticeable in large numbers. The two wars with the opportunities which they afforded for great numbers of young men to be schooled as officers and gentlemen, the increase in the demand for professional and clerical skills, the increase in grammar school and university attendance between the wars and their tremendous increase after the Second World War, have all created a public zealous for the culture of the refined classes.

Continental holidays, the connoisseurship of wine and food, the knowledge of wild flowers and birds, acquaintance with the writings of Jane Austen, a knowing indulgence for the worthies of the English past, an appreciation of "more leisurely epochs," doing one's job dutifully and reliably, the cultivation of personal relations—these are the elements in the ethos of the newly emerging British intellectual class. It is around an ethos of this sort that nowadays the new attachment to Great Britain is formed. It is in its attachment to symbols of a culture which have always been associated with a "stake in the country" that the British intellectual has been finding its way home. It is through the limited range of sympathy characteristic of that culture, elegant and admirable though it is, that the present-day British intellectual restricts his attachment to British society, and it is around that ethos that the misery and uneasiness of the incompletely assimilated are focussed.

Insiders and Outsiders

THE triumph of the contemporary version of the aristocratic-gentry culture has not resulted in the complete assimilation of the intellectuals to the nation and its institutions. It has only meant a reattachment to a sector of the upper classes. The aristocratic-gentry culture assumes and implicitly praises a considerable stratification of the British society; it makes clear the inferiority of the business world, of the mere technician, of the practical man, and of the enthusiast, moral, religious, and political. It praises the authority which rests ultimately on the Crown and on the land, and it derogates authority which is unconnected with those two sources. It measures its praise in accordance with the proximity of a person to those sources or to the institutions associated with them. The acceptance of this ideal by the intellectuals, then, cannot be without serious consequences for a society which is still a largely bourgeois society in its economic organisation and which still possesses much more than traces of cultures other than the aristocratic-gentry one.

The reconquest has created the problems which are characteristic of situations in which a superior culture is superimposed on more backward cultures. There is a tendency

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towards "over-assimilation"—becoming more genteel than gentility requires—on the part of marginal persons, and there is also much resentment generated within the minds of those who "over-assimilate." At the same time, on the top, there is a tendency for the beneficiaries of the superior culture to confine themselves to their own culture and its realm and to close themselves off from the rest.

Let us deal first with the latter consequence—the narrowness of the range of sympathy and curiosity of the British intelligentsia within its own society. Many students of English literature over the past half century have remarked on the limited scope of its subject-matter. Novels of working-class life are certainly extremely rare, both in general and among the writers who succeed in being taken up by the arbiters of taste in the literary reviews, on the BBC, etc. If one surveys the works of the chief writers of the present day, what does one find? In the writings, for example, of Anthony Powell, Julia Strachey, William Cooper, William Plomer,* Elizabeth Bowen, Elizabeth Lake, Antonia White, *et al.*, we do not find the working classes treated at all. Do we find shopkeepers, clerks, small business? There is a little more openness there. William Sansom treats Suburbia because its dull placidity is an excellent foil for diabolism; V. S. Pritchett comes closer to a sympathetic depiction but nonetheless *It May Never Happen*, effectively, and *Mr. Beluncle*, ineffectively, use a petit-bourgeois atmosphere to uncover amusing eccentricities, minor and fairly amiable madnesses. Businessmen do very poorly. The old-fashioned business brute whom Mr. Pritchett kills off in *Nothing Like Leather*, the cultured Northern business family so fascinating to the narrating outsider and so sympathetically described by Mr. Priestley in *Bright Day*, are as close as the present-day British intellectual comes to intimacy with the world of commerce and industry. Mr. J. D. Scott contrasts the business twisters—significantly enough, of the film world which apparently represents the world of business at large—with the educated, dutiful, and virtuous Civil Servant and the glamorous film creator; Mr. Geoffrey Cottrell contrasts the business scoundrels, to whom the climber from the lower middle classes has gained connections by marriage, with his old friends who have virtuously gone ahead in Labour politics.

This is not intended as criticism of the contemporary English novel, but only as an indication of the spontaneous inclinations and the objects of aversion of the intellectuals. It reveals the very special area of attachment of the intellectuals to British society. Their very attachment, and the patriotism associated with it, blinds them to British society in its wider reaches. It does not to be sure, breed hostility or bitterness or contempt towards the other classes in society; and the attachment to this culture makes for a greater homogeneity within the class itself. While this is, morally and politically, an advantage, it is intellectually a disadvantage. It makes them less good as intellectuals, among whose tasks—there are many others—is the truthful interpretation of their national society and its culture to their own countrymen and the world.

There is another consequence of this specialised affection of the intellectuals for British society. This is the invisible but painfully tangible ring *within* the intellectual class which shuts off those inside the charmed circle from the fellow-travellers and aspirants—which separates those who are thought to live fully in the culture of the aristocracy and gentry from those who admire them for doing so, and who would do so themselves if they could.

It is manifested in many ways. Recently we have heard again the charges that there is a literary clique, an organised body of friends, which dominates British literary life. This is an extreme manifestation, it is true, of that eternal affliction of the "outsider" in every society, —namely, the belief that at the centre of the magic circle a closed group schemes and rules to the deliberate disadvantage of the excluded. For years Dr. Leavis has assailed the wickedness of Bloomsbury, its coterie culture, its meretricious standards and its improper influence *via* the BBC, the British Council, and other official

* William Plomer's *The Invaders* is an exception which argues that an effort to enter into contact with the lower classes will be hopelessly frustrated.

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organs, and his lament sounds once more as an overtone in the skirmishes of the new provincialism against the Oxford–Cambridge–London triangle. This preoccupation with an inner circle, is very evident in the modern universities where Oxford and Cambridge—and London, as far as the provinces are concerned—are invisible presences; in the Common Rooms, appointments and disappointments at Oxford and Cambridge are as real and immediate as if they were happening right there. Questions about students in the modern universities are very often met with a bitter complaint that the students at the local university are poor—with the addition that the good ones go to Oxford or Cambridge, and sometimes London is added in a sober afterthought. The desire to be at the institution as little as possible, and away as much as possible, is part of the injury done to corporate and individual self-esteem by the vestigial but persisting traces of the barrier between the Two Nations within the intellectual class—the Nation of London, Cambridge, Oxford, of the higher Civil Service, of the genteel and sophisticated; and the Nation of the provinces, of petit-bourgeois and upper working-class origin, of bourgeois environment, studious, diligent, and specialised.

The Unsolved Problem

THE assimilation of the new intellectuals into the ideal pattern of the old intellectual class is a terribly difficult task which still remains to be solved. On the surface, it appears to go on merrily and cheerfully; the new intellectual rejoices in every new cultural acquisition which brings him nearer the old—like the brilliant young university lecturer who, a few years ago, could not tell grape juice from wine except by the after-effects and who now takes such pleasure in sparing no one from his knowledge of vintages and vintners, and who even can tell the difference between the wines produced on two neighbouring California hillsides.

Underneath the surface, however, all does not go so well. At the very top of the profession, a man who has talent, genius, or good fortune, finds acceptance by his peers and admission to their society. The strain of being an outsider is more painfully experienced in the young and in those who do not quite reach the pinnacle of achievement. The insecurity is not, by any means, just a matter of personal achievement; it is also affected by the status of school and university through which this man has passed as a student, and of the institution of which he is a member. It is also in part a matter of his social or family origin although that is less important than the other factors mentioned. The man doomed to live at a provincial university feels it—he feels it if he is a graduate of a provincial university and he feels it worse if he is a graduate of an ancient university. Injured sentiments, memories of slights and rejections accumulate, and fantasy accentuates it all. Mostly, however, the sense of being in the outer circle is expressed in faint sniffs of distaste for students, in mockery and irony. It affects the young more than it does their elders and students more than staff.

Nor is it entirely a matter of the subjective creation of a barrier by those who feel themselves to be outsiders. Part of the exclusiveness of the aristocratic-gentry higher civil service culture arises, not from the organisation of a coterie, but from the fact that it is a humanistic culture, hostile to unbalanced specialisation and hostile therefore to those professions, the practice and traditions of which necessitate the preoccupations of specialisation, and in which the modern universities are so strong. We see it in the ambivalence towards post-graduate research at Oxford and Cambridge and in a more trivial way we see it in the attitude towards the academic titles of address of Professor and Doctor in those universities. Much more importantly we see it in the long-drawn-out and unsatisfactory discussion about the development of institutions of higher technological studies. The training of technologists on this level is repugnant to the ancient universities and their proponents who feel perhaps rightly that such studies are too practical and too "unhumane" to be admitted to their universities; at the same time, they also do not like the idea of independent specialised institutions of University rank where technological research and studies can be carried on, as if they

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were on the same dignity as traditional university studies.*

Finally a word may be said on the influence of the coterie itself. It seems to be no more important in England than in any other centralised country where the leading men in each field of intellectual activity come to know one another personally, either because they happen to have been at school together or because their eminence at the peak of their profession has brought them together. On the whole, although there occasionally seem to be some odd goings-on made possible by anonymous reviewing, British intellectual life does not seem to be regulated internally by personal attachments to a much greater extent than in other countries. To a very considerable degree it seems to be governed by impersonal standards that are in part standards which have been associated with certain restricted classes and institutions, themselves the objects of strong, if ambivalent, sentiment.

Those who have grown up inside the culture of these classes and institutions, feel very much at home in them nowadays. But those who have not, are powerfully attracted by them and are yet put off by the implication of their unworthiness for not having been so born. It is not an accident that the *New Statesman and Nation* with its wide circulation should present an apparently contradictory table of contents: cranky radicalism in its political pages and genteel culture in its literary and cultural sections; or that it should combine Bevanism in politics with a special wine supplement.

* It has sometimes been said that the reason why scientists, especially in Great Britain, have been inclined towards political radicalism lies in the nature of the subject, which requires the use of reason unaided by tradition and which involves the manipulation of material things in accordance with rational principles. Quite apart from the dubious picture of scientific work which this explanation adduces, it seems to suffer from disregard of some simple facts: namely, that in Great Britain, science which is less than pure science is *infra dig*, and that a disproportionately large amount of the best scientific work of Great Britain, pure as well as applied, is carried on in the modern universities which can confer on their numbers little prestige beyond what they can achieve by their work. Scientists, even pure scientists, and certainly applied scientists in Great Britain, live and work in an atmosphere which makes at least some of them regard themselves as outsiders.

V

THE New Elizabethans who were conjured up in aspiration two years ago as the carriers of British tradition have petered out into thin air. The culture of this age is nothing like the old Elizabethan culture. The new Elizabethan age is an age of very notable talent but it is a talent of fine lineaments, of delicate but not deep voice, of restraint which binds no passion, of subtlety without grandeur. Outside the China of the Mandarins, no great society has ever had a body of intellectuals so integrated with, and so congenial to, its ruling class, and so combining civility and refinement. The consensus thus achieved is remarkable. What are the costs?

Just as in the 19th century the public schools and the universities had the task of assimilating into the ruling classes the heirs and descendants of wealthy businessmen who had made the necessary concessions to the spiritual *ancien régime*, so present-day Britain has the equally important task of assimilating into its great traditions the new aspirants to the ruling classes, broadly conceived, who come from the lower-middle and upper-working classes. It was easier to assimilate newcomers when they were only a trickle and when the institutions of assimilation were thoroughly governed by the older culture. It is more difficult now, when the numbers are greater and when many of the institutions themselves have only an ambivalent and uncertain hold on the older culture. The success of the present process of assimilation and refinement is being achieved at the cost of a narrowing of sensibility and imagination, and of a hard, conflict-engendering pressure on those who crowd the periphery.

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Four Poems by Alan Ross

VENETIAN GAMES

All day, on seats along the curved Schiavone,
They move their glittering Coca-Cola tops
Like draughts about mosaic boards, whose stony
Surfaces are polished by the mops
Of early-morning cleaners. Gently a bony
Hand pushes its tinny piece to some new square,
Or eyes are raised to S. Giorgio Maggiore, green against the copper air.

Outside churches, in drowsy piazzas off the Grand Canal,
Or on small campos that are never quite banal,
Urchins play a kind of bowls with rubber heels—
Though lacking bias, these drop true—in place of woods.
Soiled notes change hands depending how they fall.
Cool nuns and scurrying monks peer out from hoods
To mark the winner, whooping as he turns cartwheels.

Beneath the clock tower where two Moors
Of enviable muscle strike the hours, green-baize
Tables glow inside saloons with swinging doors.
White cats on windows mild in sun raise
Quizzical whiskers as a shot is missed,
Or narrow their pupils to judge when balls have kissed:
Inside, light smokes on skulls, on ivory, through persistent haze.

GIUSEPPE OF CARLOFORTE, SARDINIA

Head heavy as a cut white chrysanthemum,
Bobbing between masts, as though it were in fact
A flower he was carrying, a gift that must be treated
With care, he moves—a professional good fellow—
From boat to boat, unloading anecdotes while others work,
Easing his linen belly like a faded drum
Over sun-warmed decks. And so great is his presence

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He seems, a one-man band, to be beating it
To proclaim his arrival, a fanfare of benevolence.
Older than anyone, his trousers a patched sky, he pads
The quay like a panther, striping it with his shadow
As he advances up gangways, supervisor who does nothing
But stretch out over holds glistening with fish,
The names of ports rolled round his tongue—Havana,
Buenos Aires, Ferrol, Ragusa—as if they could help
To make work tolerable, at least pay for his upkeep.
The tunny fleet, cadaverous and scrubbed, rides under his gaze,
Bows painted with meticulous faces, unwinking as saints:
And mineral boats, the sky white light on their crucifix mastheads,
Squat like green birds, their bellies full of quartz.
Raised on one elbow, he surveys them as if they were his,
By right of his being there, like the view, the coastline
Of palms, the half-moons of bays under ink-blue rocks—
Common property of those who make imagination work for them.
In fact they are, for he is Giuseppe, millionaire beggar
Late of the Bronx, who made a fortune from hawking matches
And, returned to his birthplace, invested in ships.
Now, athwart decks all day, he lies,
Expert in squandering time, rolling marbles the colour of his eyes.

NURAGHI NEAR ABBASANTA SARDINIA

HERE men hunted, fished, shot,
Worked miracles with flint
And obsidian, occasionally got
Drunk, fighting with each other
Or over women. The steel glint
Of stone flashed over plains, bare
Except for boulders, cactus and maize,
A desert-coloured stubble, where
Always mountains stalked under blue haze
In the distance, but in dreams came nearer.
On good days they made, out of bronze,
Warriors and animals, cutting out masks
For nights of *festa*; images dearer
To them than the toy amusements
Of city-statesmen. The sun beating
In hammers of light, they waited on rocks
For wild boar, partridge, deer, retreating
When shadows fluted their stone clocks,
To coned forts, these circular look-outs.

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Now three thousand of them, that many
Years later, litter this island;
Like crumbling tombs of especially grand
Chieftains they stick out from this granary
Of Rome wherever the land rises.
But the bronze objects, safe under glass,
Still draw their bows, firing at whoever may pass
By them inquisitive of their delicacy:
Miniature boats, herdsmen, attest their efficacy,
Suggesting how sophisticated was the primitive
Grasp of reality, the visual boldness
Of men for whom art was alive,
Like hunting or building, a process
Necessary for survival, an attempt
At self-knowledge. Revealing to them in their unkempt
Surroundings, their roughshod history,
What manner of people they were,
The nature of their lives, their claims to glory.

EMBANKMENT BEFORE SNOW

A ZINC afternoon. The barges black
And black the funnels of tugs nosing
Phlegm-coloured waves slap slapping
Stone wharves. A smell of sacking
And soot. Grey chimneys, and statues
Grey with cold, and grey lifebelts.
Now the arthritic gulls,
Seedy with displeasure, crotchet on railings,
Falling with a flat splash on wet bread.
Green is under black in the gardens
Bearing the frozen face of Huskisson,
Statesman, but trees are black all through.
The sun fumes behind mist which rises
To thicken this smoke, make dusk black.
The river, eyed by launches, hangs its cranes
To grab nothing
But cold black air aqueous and rotting.

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George Stafford Gale

No Flies in China

Exodus

THE sun was shining. The delegation itself was already seated before the ordinary passengers joined the plane. Seated, and somewhat oddly, for they had spread themselves out. Right at the front, in three seats facing frontwards and two backwards, with a little table between them, sat five. Of the three facing forwards Sam Watson sat by the window. Next to him was Bevan. And in the third seat, almost in the gangway (indeed actually in the gangway, for this seat was an extra one with no table in front of it), was Harry Earnshaw. Opposite them sat Morgan Phillips, face at the window, and beside him, Wilfred Burke. Bevan was thus surrounded by orthodoxy. Now it takes four hours to fly from London to Stockholm. During that time hardly a word passed between these five. Once, Mr. Bevan turned to Mr. Earnshaw, stuck out his hand, fluttered his chest, pointed to his watch on his wrist, and said, "If we'd left on time we'd have been there now." Mr. Earnshaw nodded. Earlier, Wilfred Burke had leaned over to me, who was sitting across the gangway, and said, "How many of you are there?" "Six," I said. "Six of what?" asked Bevan. "Journalists," said Wilfred Burke.

For the remainder of the journey—such, that is, that was not taken up with apéritifs (at 4.30), lunch (5.15), and coffee, Mr. Bevan read a vivid glossy paper-back which could have been anything, Mr. Morgan Phillips looked as if he had looked better, Mr. Sam Watson sensibly slept, Mr. Earnshaw said nothing, and Mr. Burke looked and undoubtedly was bored. The rest of the party sat in various degrees of splendid isolation. Of these, the most splendid perhaps was that of Mr. Henry Franklin, who was the only passenger in the plane with no one at all sitting beside him. He is a pacifist, a man of Christian principles, had been president of the National Union of Railwaymen, was a man who objected to every word I wrote about China but, being a trade unionist rather than a politician, bore no malice and freely conceded the right of an alternative opinion to his own. A nice man: he said in the plane, "I want to study how much goods the workers in China are really able to buy." Dr. Edith Summerskill, it seemed most ungallantly, sat unescorted by any of her colleagues, but this was hardly likely to keep her down. She is as energetic a conversationalist as Bevan, and upholds female emancipation with as much verve as he does primordial socialism. She had some ordinary passenger sitting beside her, and without any more ado she struck up conversation indomitably.

And Mr. Attlee also sat alone. He shrank into his seat. Mercifully, there were two businessmen beside him, and they determined upon sleep. Only one incident served to disturb the even tenor of his hibernation. Mr. Bevan rose and walked down the aisle to the lavatory. Mr. Attlee, who had not noticed this, immediately rose to do likewise, but when he got there the door clearly enough announced "engaged." Mr. Attlee waited and waited. He even passed the time of day with the stewardess. He waited and waited. I began to get worried. I had not reckoned to do a story that night. I waited, Mr. Attlee waited. Then at last Mr. Bevan emerged. He came out. Mr. Attlee went in—and not a word, not a glance, passed between them.

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Peking

ULAN BATOR: Sajn Sandra: Peking. It is a flight full of wonder and excitement. Here we were, up in the clean cold air, breakfasting at Ulan Bator off hard-boiled eggs and salami and coarse bread, in a squat, bleak building designed entirely to keep the winter cold out. Around stretched the lean, lank Mongolian foothills, like flea-ridden donkey's flanks, half eaten away, and the dry white bones of the immaculate dry river courses. Then up we went, over the mountains, with pains in our chest, and out and across the Gobi desert.

We landed for half an hour at Sajn Sandra, where the airstrip was only the desert sand, and there was nothing but a few white bungalows, flocks of scattering camels, around us the hills, now folded like the folds in felt. The wonderful air came sweeping in from a clean, wholesome sky. Out again over the desert, then the crinkled hills again, and around them, beneath them, in their folds, we saw China beginning, with walled towns and fields tangled in the mountains. Great rivers, some empty, others with brown water in them, swept out of valleys, and on the smaller hills were terraced fields. Out of the great and magnificent panorama, which first seemed patternless, a pattern grew, for the rivers all flowed into a central valley, and now we were flying down this valley. And suddenly below us was the Great Wall of China, running east, the ancient boundary, following the crests of the first line of foothills. For now we were into the Chinese plain, and the hills and mountains behind the Wall rose higher, remoter, away behind us, cutting through the distant clouds with their sharp edges. We now were dropping, the mountains receded, then suddenly we saw Peking. A great square piece of dark grey in the green land, its vast walls bounding a city of three millions and the capital of six hundred millions. We flew over a flashing lake, saw an arched decorative bridge, a willow-pattern picture, saw the shining roof of a pagoda, and landed into the brilliant heat.

It was a Saturday afternoon. Waiting outside the plane was an insignificant little man and several bunches of flowers. The flowers were for some women to an international conference. The little man was there for us, and he called himself a representative of the China Travel Service. His English was barely discernible, but he conducted us down an avenue of trees loud with the love-making of cicadas to a large, gaunt waiting-room with benches down the middle and a huge portrait of Mao at one end and empty space at the other. In a corridor an equally large companion portrait of Stalin was propped against a wall, gathering dust. Before we left Peking Malenkov was installed opposite Mao. We had only been in the room five minutes when we had become enmeshed.

There were six of us. We had all got our visas the same way, by sending our passports to the Chinese Consulate in Berne, which was the nearest Chinese diplomatic post to London, together with a form that the Consulate had supplied us. The Consulate knew all about us, for before we had left there had been a good deal of negotiation about which newspapers were to be allowed to travel, and so on. We received our passports back, duly stamped with visas in Chinese characters which looked genuine enough. We discovered at Peking that only two of us had the right visas, and the other four of us should have entered China from the South, by way of Hong Kong instead of from the North by way of Ulan Bator. This at first we treated lightly—a clerical error at Berne, we explained. But then we slowly realised that we were not to be allowed to enter Peking, and that we would have to go all the way down to Hong Kong and come back again. Meanwhile another difficulty had cropped up. We had no Chinese money, only travellers cheques. We asked the little man from the China Travel Service whether we could cash any of these at the airport. Certainly, he replied, went away and came back with some elaborate forms, printed in Chinese. Laboriously we filled these in as best we could. At this stage we were temporarily diverted for a Customs examination, where the only person who got into any trouble at all was Sam Russell who was bringing some paper-backed books in for the entertainment of the permanent *Daily Worker* correspondent in Peking, Alan Winnington. The Customs officer was very doubtful about

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them, but he let them through. Round about this time we heard again from the little man, who, having failed to convince the man who refused to stamp our visas had by now got into touch with the Foreign Ministry and had persuaded them to allow us a concession, as a special favour to grant us a special privilege. We were to be allowed in, our passports unstamped (that is, illegally), on the understanding that we would get a new and correct visa from the Foreign Ministry and return to the airport to get it stamped by the implacable policeman.

We were still in the middle of trying to get money. We were taken to a desk, and another official asked us to sign all our travellers cheques and hand them in. We attempted to explain that we did not want to change all our cheques into Chinese money, but only a hundred pounds' worth. We had filled in our forms, we thought, saying both how much we had and how much we wanted to change. We signed a hundred pounds' worth each and handed them in. By now we were getting suspicious. It was manifestly clear that this clerk did not have five or six hundred pounds' worth of Chinese money anywhere around, and here he was, insisting that we hand in all our cheques. Slowly, through the fog, we gathered that it was "a rule of China" to hand in every travellers cheque. We sighed, we handed them in. It was promised to us that we would get them back as soon as we went to the Bank, where we would also get our money. When were we going to the Bank? "Right away," said the smiling little Chinese from the Travel Service, who told us he had rung the Bank up and that they would certainly stay open for us. In return for our money (about £500 each) we were presented with a delicate little piece of rice paper with a red seal on it. All this had taken an hour and a half, in the hottest part of the day in the hottest month of the year, after a flight that had begun at Irkutsk at ten to five in the morning.

We at last went outside, into the burning sun. There were two cars. One, we were told, was for our luggage, the other for us. Six of us, the driver, and the little man from the Travel Service into one small car does not and did not go. There was more arguing. Our luggage was piled in a heap at the door. Eventually three of us got into one of the cars, thinking that that might precipitate a decision, but it did not. We sat and amused ourselves by watching a young labourer resting in the shade from digging a hole in the road. Suddenly he smacked his arm and plucked from it a stunned fly. I like to think that this was the last fly in China and that I watched its formal burial. Carefully, exquisitely almost, with little fingers held aloft like genteel snobs with cups of tea do, he plucked its wings off and then its legs off. Presently he saw us looking at him and smiled proudly. We smiled back. He burst out laughing. His fellow workmen joined him and they too began to laugh. He took the fly's carcase and carefully stuck it on the spike of a cactus-like plant. We now were laughing loudly, almost hysterically, and his pride now rose and flared like a peacock's tail. He looked at the fly on the spike and waggled the spike and pointed it at us, laughing all the while. We were still giggling. Eventually we started off, in two cars, leaving our luggage behind.

IT IS said of Peking that having been there an afternoon you never want to leave it. It is also said that no one is ever bored there. These must have been true once. There is a wonder and a delight in China, and perhaps especially in Peking. In and around this city you can learn China's greatest beauty: the accord, which were it not so natural might seem miraculous, between the land and what grows out of the land and who cultivates the land or otherwise works closely with it and from it. Even these ancient carts, these squat carts made of old bleached wood and drawn by donkeys or ponies or occasionally oxen, do not here become incongruous when equipped—as many of them are—with rubber tyres. It is these carts which carry China, are the lorries of new China as well as the carts of the old. Their miscellaneous old tyres, patched or flat, are greatly prized, and dumps of them outside the walls are centres of enterprise and marketing. Along the dusty roads leading into cities all over China there are long convoys of these carts, laden with broken stones or heaped with

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lime, endlessly moving, slowly, to the town streets or the latest building enterprise. The beauty of slow, crumbling movement, such as these wretched carts possessed, was an original beauty. At the donkey's side, or beside the stumbling cart, the coolie walks, or sits perched on the rubble piles, flicking his whip or else not even blinking. In the sun's heat they will draw into the shade of the trees at the side of the road, and sleep, or as if they slept, pass the time of the hottest of the day. In all their actions and in their faces too there is the calm and infinite patience of those who have no ambition because their knowledge of needs and wants is limited to a bellyful of rice, shelter, a cotton quilt for the winter, and a wife. She might well be walking alongside another cart, when the sun eases. And in the fields alongside the roads the peasants also, bending slowly to the hoe, or walking between the high fields of Indian corn, or treadling the mill that lifts the water to the beds of rice, have the same unhurry, which is slower than the measured beat of farm workers in England, and is the unhurry of those who know no reason why they or other men should hurry. They are part of the landscape, entirely, and nothing else, more or less, than that. For this landscape of China, with its marvellous greens, dusty blue greens, pale lemon greens, vivid rice greens, is a created landscape and in the creation the men have become part of it, like we say a man grows to look like his wife or his dog, except that this identification seems entirely proper, and not a matter of domestic comfort. It is an intangible, timeless thing, a thing that someone used to typewriters feels humble before, to see ignorant men being fit and proper parts of their environment and beautifully so, growing out of the fertile silt of China as splendidly as any tiger out of his tawny jungle and apter by far than the bespectacled clerk from the midst of his city's statistical files.

They seem undistinguished from each other, these coolies, and indistinguishable. Look along this line of lime-carts, white with dust, and the dust clinging to the sweating donkeys and to the sweating lines of silent men, moving by the sides of their carts, with wide straw hats, torn dusty shirts, ragged cotton pants, each one of them a six hundred millionth part of China; look at their faces. There is no expression on them I can see, save this ancient timeless distant look of men who have never seen beyond those blue brown hills that fringe the horizon, or wanted to, or perhaps even known that there is anything beyond them. They may be playful lovers, some of these men, cruel fathers, generous uncles, grumblers, known for wit or wisdom or knowledge of the ancients, perhaps bad-tempered or sweet-tempered—you do not know.

The lime-carts and the stone-carts move towards the town, and come back empty. The town, the great capital, draws them in, these carts, for everywhere new buildings are going up, offices, barracks, hotels, flats. Peking is an old town, and an old capital, and very quickly has to become a modern capital. Peasants, too, are being drawn in to the capital, to the town. You sometimes see them along the roads, with a pile of clothes and a cotton quilt in a bundle on their backs, or, more often, piling out of trains, come from the countryside to fill the factories or work on the new building projects. But outside Peking it is the carts you notice, moving in very slowly, hardly protesting or moving to the side when big black official cars sweep by, horns blaring, churning up great clouds of dust and sending the pebbles scattering on to the donkeys' legs. They move in very early in the morning and late at night. In the wonderful Chinese first light, the beginning of another hot summer day, when for an hour or so the sun will not burn and the night's steam is rising and being dried by the swiftly warming air, and although there has been no frost the atmospheric cleanliness is the same, and smoke rises from the open stoves of the street kitchens and the chickens begin scuttling around the waste plots and crowing from shards and pieces of broken wood or torn shreds of corrugated iron around the shacks outside the city walls, and children begin scratching their eyes, and there's some pale mist around the pagoda roofs, then, as early, at six in the morning or before, the carts are moving in towards the grey walls of Peking. The walls slant upwards, inwards, tall and thick and old and mysterious. Around the

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shacks at their feet children are playing in the dry mud, and loads of rubble are being dropped around the vast permanent exhibition building that the Russians are putting up as a present to Peking, and its bright new and solemnly pretentious pillars and florid golden star atop its spire shine in the first direct sunlight. Pass this by: it is offensive at this moment. Cocks are crowing; the tinkling bells on the bamboo rod tells that a sweetmeat bakeman is coming. The rice and soup in the kitchen cafés are ready. The cicadas now are full of noisy love.

The best way to see Peking is by pedicab. Everywhere there are pedicabs. Once there were 40,000 of them. Now I believe the number is down to 25,000. How 40,000 of them ever found enough to do I don't know. These contraptions have the back of a rickshaw and the front of a bicycle. They are really tricycles, and the coolie peddles in front, and behind him, in a sort of armchair, you relax. It is impossible to sit in these things without crossing one leg over the other, leaning back, spreading your arms along the edges of the cradle, and feeling superior. The Chinese nowadays disapprove of pedicabs and no new ones are being built. But there are no taxis in Peking —not for ordinary, unprivileged hire—and trams only serve a couple of arterial streets. Ancient Chinese women and children—their children, probably, but they look like grandchildren—use the pedicabs, fragile whiskery men, lusty young men, heavy women with piles of washing, children piled high; and, of course, we used them. The pedicabs themselves are falling to pieces. Their ancient artificial leather seats are perished and crumbling and the stuffing is dropping out. The shades, if they still have them, are now tattered, rotting canvas or occasionally, if you are lucky, clean white cotton which sometimes also has been used to provide loose covers for the seat. But usually when you sit in one of them a nail or loosed screw or splinter catches your clothes. When water carts sprinkle Peking's streets, immediately afterwards a thick brown mud is formed. The pedicab's mudguards are broken and useless. Thus, your elegantly draped legs get splattered with solid drops of Peking mud.

The pedicabs wait for custom usually in great dead queues in the shade of a wall or avenue of trees. In the burning August afternoon and the early morning and the cooler night they stand with the still patience of animals. Their owner-drivers sprawl across them yet more luxuriously than we could, for they sit in the seats and prop their feet on the handlebars. How long they would sleep like this I don't know, hour long, day long, possibly week long. I think many of them lived in their pedicabs. In the pale early misty morning they slowly stir, raise their legs from the handlebars, stretch, and move off to join the other queues for rice and soup. In recollection I find I keep returning to this time of day and this place and setting, and the smoke of the kitchen fires and beyond the blue mountains and at hand the stone-carts creaking by—about all this, even the entire Peking landscape, but particularly in the hours when the atmosphere is with you, like early morning, or in evening thunderstorms, is an intangible beauty of appropriateness.

Treasure Hunt

We went to a party at the British Embassy. It was a party I would not have believed possible. For want of an International Club in the new Peking, some indefatigable members of the British Embassy have started their own club. It was to a party given by this club that we were invited, a "barbecue" they insisted upon calling it. The British Embassy in Peking is an enormous garden dotted here and there with large houses, numbered from 1 to 12 or so. No. 1 house—the ambassador's, is not used because it is too big by far. Mr. Humphrey Trevelyan, the chargé d'affaires, contents himself with No. 3. The whole estate was once a Chinese nobleman's, and the barbecue took place beneath an open pavilion which was merely a Chinese roof on top of some pillars. The whole thing had been redecorated and now was resplendent in the traditional Chinese decorative enamels—scarlet, a deep green, gold and a blue slightly darker than royal. The only incongruity about this charming building, which was lit by Chinese lanterns (filled with electric bulbs), were the strange markings on the tiled floor of the pavilion. These consisted of

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white lines, about two inches wide, marked out in a kind of rectangular pattern. Upon enquiry I learned that the pavilion was used in the cooler months for playing badminton. "Oh yes, and we have some clay tennis courts round at the back, and a croquet lawn, but that is never used," one of the secretaries chirped.

Well, at this time, it was being used for a barbecue, and sure enough there was a brazier, rather like a glorified version of the sort erected and set going by a British workman the moment he begins to take up a road, to boil the tea on and keep himself warm. There was no need of heat: the Peking night in August was very hot. But beside this grill there was a table full of little thin pieces of meat and you had to skewer one of these pieces and sweat and blister over the grill—with chopsticks: "it's fun!"—until your little piece of meat had curled up, was burned to cinders on the outside and was still damp and cool on the inside of its curls. The prize was then born to a table and consumed, along with all the infinitely more palatable offerings of a Chinese cold table, with whomever you found yourself beside. You could also get a drink if you were lucky, a sort of fruit cocktail with a dash of gin, or some beer out of a big metal barrel.

I sat next to a Swedish diplomat. He said to me, "Orwell is banned here not because the Chinese dislike him but because his books are much too valuable as Government textbooks to be bandied about among the public." Somebody banged out a chord on a tinny upright piano that stood in the corner of the pavilion. The first secretary got to his feet. "Now," he said, "we are going to have a Treasure Hunt." There was a gasp, which was half delight (and came from the diplomatic residents in Peking) and half astonished dismay (us). "It's all right," said the first secretary. "It won't be difficult. Everybody must choose a partner and those who know the Embassy must choose a partner from those who don't. Because more people don't than do, the Press will count as if they knew it here." Everybody started scurrying around, the Embassy girls seizing on strapping Pakistanis, the Embassy men on pretty Swedish secretaries. I got left out and went and had another drink, and watched everybody from the bar. Then I was grabbed away. "Come on! Everybody's got to join the fun!" John Ridley, of the *Daily Telegraph*, had got hold of a pretty Indonesian girl and had another one seeming to be in tow, so we joined forces. By now practically everybody had got four or five clues, and we cheated once or twice, then made a determined effort to find something which had three arms, was only light when it was dark, and marked a corner by a bird. We straggled around the gardens until someone was declared the winner, with all ten clues right. We had been looking for a lamp-post, we subsequently discovered. The winner was the Clerk of Works at the Embassy, which everyone thought was cheating.

"Can anyone play the piano? Well, it will have to be you again, John." We sat back, panting from the Treasure Hunt and were handed out mimeographed songsheets. We were now to have a sing-song. I was getting punch-drunk. Here was "Drink to me only with thine eyes," and the "Foggy, foggy dew" and "Waltzing Matilda," interspersed with solos from a Chinese baritone and my little Indonesian partner of the Treasure Hunt, who sang some native songs quite effectively. And right at the end, Mr. Bevan and Mr. Morgan Phillips wandered in, red faced and sweating, and talking a lot. They were quickly whisked off to a diplomatic and ambassadorial seclusion.

I suppose there is an air of unreality about life among diplomats anywhere, and to some extent about life as life by newspaper correspondents abroad: but in Peking the unreality had always the elements of fantasy. Interviews with officials were rituals; there was something not far off desperation in parties (although drinks before lunch with the Trevelyans had a colonial simplicity about them, and might almost, indeed, have taken place in England); banquets were interminable and formless, for speeches were made continually and toasts were continually drunk and you never knew at what stage in the meal you were with lotus roots in mimosa sauce and sharks' fin soup and birds' nest soup and fish and fruit salad in melons and duck skin and chicken and tough little pieces of meat; and then, too, there were these chance

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meetings with the delegation, like two pieces of flotsam bumping against each other every so often in the swelling tide water; press conferences were given by Morgan Phillips lying flat on his back on his bed and sick with the heat; and never at all was there a successful conversation with a Chinese but always the bland smile and the blank wall.

Mukden and Anshan

THEY took us on a tour of Mukden. It is the meanest and ugliest town I have seen, I think, worse even than the black towns that stretch between Manchester and Preston. It is not so much black as grey. The streets have been laid out with rulers, and are wide and straight and scored with tram-lines and edged with poor, jerry-built shopfronts with little windows and dusty posters and display-cards in them. Each street looks like the next. Every so often there is a bigger building, and looking at its windows you can't be sure whether it is a shop or a factory or an office. It might be painted in buff wash that is dirty on plaster that is thin and cracked. They swept us around these streets and then out along an interminable road to a new housing estate. The roads around the estate were not laid down, and we bumped over the mud and clay. The flats were in huge blocks, several stories high, of an institutional, decorated Georgian design. We did not see inside or learn how much living-space there was for a family, but we gathered that there were communal kitchens and eating rooms, and that a family might have a room, or sometimes two. There were dozens of these great blocks. We swept by them, turned corners and saw new vistas of them, drove around for a quarter of an hour or more and still we saw more of them. I remember that towards the end we began seeing blocks that we had already passed at the beginning, but whether this was a necessity of the route or an added refinement of propaganda remained unclear. If the latter, it was unnecessary for we certainly saw a lot of blocks and that meant a lot of flats and families. It was quite the biggest single housing enterprise that I have seen, and anywhere but in China would wish to see. These solemn blocks stood in the flat muddy land with as much rhyme and reason as a child, playing with bricks, arranges them on a carpet. They were there. Then you looked around and saw the smoking skyline, and they told us that the factories were only a half an hour's walk away. And then, also, you drove back past the shacks and shanties and slums and chickens and corrugated iron and rotten shreds of planks and fraying canvas. There was better rhyme in the ugly blocks, and reason enough in the tall, smoking chimneys, and who was I to get sentimental over smoke when the clean air had meant poverty, or make an art critic of myself over these dormitory blocks when they obviously didn't leak and were heated in the winter and in any case were better to look at than the wide streets with their crouching little shopfronts?

Our coach had been hooked on to a regular train to Anshan. It was quite a nice coach, rather like an Edwardian Pullman. Or, more accurately, an observation car from one of the American railroads. This is what it probably was. Its wood panellings were elaborately veneered, its glasswork was ground and decorated. Its lampholdings and such like were tangled, knobbly brass. The whole coach had an air of jaded opulence about it. And in this we travelled through Manchuria from Mukden to Anshan.

Anshan is the great glory of China. The Chinese now rejoice in smoke, see beauty in chimneys, prefer the air filled with soot than with mimosa dust. The plans of the State Planning Board were the smoke here and the clanging and the movement of cranes and the scurrying of labourers on building sites, ant-like; and the stalks of steam sprouting from their tubular metal roots and blossoming in the air were the new flowers of liberated China. Here, in this more pleasing town, laid out with broad and curving streets and plots of grass and flowers and trees, is the hope of new China. Anshan, they say, and who is to argue, is to become one of the world's biggest iron and steel centres.

Except to the highly expert eye one factory is very much like another. At Anshan they took us round the iron plant, showing us the latest automatic blast furnace that had been put into operation, and then we were swept on to the

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rolling mill, whose output of rails is sufficient for the first Five Year Plan for railway extension, and to the seamless tube mill. An automatic sheet mill is also being completed, and together with coke ovens the entire economy of the Anshan works is that of an integrated plant, although managerial functions are kept separate.

Tsai Bo was the manager of the iron plant. He was 31, and looked less. He was slightly built, shy, deferential almost, with nothing in his dress to distinguish him from his workmen, although his face was more delicately built and his hands were not coarsened. He had been appointed deputy manager of the plant in 1951 and manager in 1953. He sat us at a whitewood table and here there were no fruit and sweets and petits fours, but tea came in. He told us that he had studied in the Soviet Union, had done a technological post-graduate course there. "We have too few such men trained in the Soviet Union," he said. This was not vanity; but the statement of fact. He explained how there had originally been nine blast furnaces laid down by the Japanese at Anshan. These were smashed when the Japanese left. There now were five large blast furnaces running and one small one. In spite of the fewer number of furnaces output was higher, he said, than under the Japanese. Their best had been 1,300,000 tons a year, and now they were getting 1,500,000 tons. The main reasons for the increased production, he thought, were the improved quality of the raw materials, improved equipment, and an improvement in the methods of operation brought about by new techniques. Then he added, "also in raising production great improvements have been made by model workers and conditions."

This, the young manager said, was the only such plant in China making iron. The adjoining Anshan steelworks were entirely dependent on the iron he made. More than enough iron was made, and some indeed had been exported. Of the annual production of 1,500,000 tons about 800,000 tons were going to the steelworks at that time, but he expected the amount would rise when the sheet mill began working.

The seamless tube mill had begun to be constructed, its manager—an older, more responsible looking man—told us, in July 1952 and was completed fifteen months later. Its design had been the work of Soviet architects, its main equipment was Russian, and only small parts had been supplied by the People's Democracy of Eastern Germany and themselves. It was, the manager laboriously explained, only one out of 141 projects of industrial construction at which the Soviet Union was assisting China. The plant itself was built by Chinese workers under the direction of Soviet specialists. Forty selected Chinese technicians went to the Soviet Union to learn the operation of a similar mill, and the Soviet specialists already in Anshan together with these forty Soviet-trained technicians organised classes to teach the workers the new processes. Now the Russians had left, and very proudly the manager said that the Chinese were now operating the plant themselves. This is perhaps the greatest source of the Chinese pride in Anshan. This mill and the automatic blast furnace show, in the words of a propaganda magazine "that Chinese workers, with technical advice and assistance from Soviet specialists, are perfectly capable of setting up and running the most up-to-date and complex plants in the spheres of metallurgy and heavy industry." This is not an idle boast, nor a strange one. The operation of a seamless tube mill is exceedingly complex, much of the processes is electronically controlled, and this plant and its running was one in which the Chinese were entitled to take the pride they did. When the Japanese ran the iron and steelworks at Anshan they used the Chinese only as unskilled and semi-skilled labour. There were no trained, skilled workmen at all when they left, except for the few technicians from the universities.

In the first six months of the mill's operation —January to June 1954—output exceeded the planned estimate, we were told, by 18 per cent, and the planned production, the manager also said, was 11,800 tons. He could not give us the figures of the actual production. Moreover, the cost of production was 26 per cent less than had been planned, and for the second quarter of the year the cost of the tubes had been 4,700,000 yuan a ton. They were making tubes of diameters between 38 mm. and 140 mm.

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The plant had been designed for tubes up to 150 mm. but they had made successful experiments for tubes up to 168 mm. "This proves the superiority of Soviet design," the manager said.

The rolling mill began production in December 1953. It had taken sixteen months to build. It was turning out about 20,000 tons of rails, beams and angles each month, at a cost of production of about 4,000,000 yuan a ton. The retail price, its manager told us, was 6,000,000 yuan.

I remember how, when we had seen all there was to see, and had marvelled at it as will any layman who sees a modern steel plant (I had seen similar mills in England and Wales, but they remain to me enterprises of a certain grandeur), the manager of the rolling mill turned to us and asked us whether we had anything to say to him, any points of criticism to make, any suggestions for improvement. It was funny, this, and in its way also a gentle act of humility, for he was running the place and none of us could even have poked the fire. To some extent the Chinese with their big new factories are as children with new toys. They delight and wonder that they—as well as the Russians or the English or the Americans—can make them work. The manager somehow thought that English journalists would know more about steelmaking than Chinese steelmakers. It was a frequent experience to be asked what improvements could be made, everywhere in China, and it may have been a pity that the only improvements I could ever think of suggesting were those for which the Chinese could never see the necessity or even the desirability.

"Gambai"

WE DRANK innumerable toasts to peaceful co-existence. Whenever the conversation flagged at official dinners someone at our table would jump up and propose the toast, and invariably he would point his glass at whomever among us English journalists was sitting at the table, and say "Gambai." This meant that we were supposed to knock back whatever was in our glass in one go. It was the Chinese equivalent of skol, prosit, bottoms up. It was the one game that they played with us, and they cheated at it, for each of them would do it to all of us and whenever we tried to do it back, they declined, even when we toasted Sino-British friendship. Most nights of the three weeks we spent in China were spent in banqueting of one sort or another, and normally at the tables where we would be put there would also be half a dozen Chinese newspapermen—editors, reporters, directors and so on—together usually with a sprinkling of officials. We tried to fraternise, we drank to peaceful co-existence. We did our best. I remember once John Ridley, at the next table, could bear it no longer and got to his feet and announced that he was sitting with the four most insufferable bores he had ever met in his life. At these tables, where often we were technically the guests of the Chinese journalists, we found one subject of conversation which could, handled properly, last the entire evening, and three toasts which always went down well. The subject was the menu, and the toasts were peaceful co-existence, Sino-British relations, and "Our friends in journalism." Laboriously we explored, at least a dozen times, the intricacies of sharks' fin soup, stew or whatever, lotus roots, birds' nest soup, fish (all fish was just fish for no Chinese ever knew the English name for a Chinese fish, supposing there was any: fish, therefore, which came around about every third course, was never very promising), melon decorated with lovers' knots, duck in lotus leaves, fish. Up and down from our seats we bobbed, toasting peaceful co-existence, Sino-British friendship (and sometimes trade), and "Our friends in journalism." Occasionally, we would drink to "Peace." This was always a solemn occasion. There was no selective gambai-ing about this. We all had to get up. And all the while, with the utmost hospitality, our bowls in front of us would be plied with diced chicken, pickled eggs, fish, fruit salad, smoked ham, fish. Yellow, orange, pink, crimson, white, the fluids in their glasses were arrayed before us.

I suppose in this way I met at least a hundred Chinese journalists. About them, apart from their joviality, I remember that not one of them ever asked any questions, that not one of them

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ever started a conversation, and that not one of them was capable of discussing the matter of free speech. This last was my conversational gambit, and I opened with it more than once in Peking, and also in Mukden, in Shanghai, in Hangchow and in Canton. The familiar conversation went like this:

"Can you criticise the Government?" I would ask.

"Of course we can. The Press in China is quite free," the Chinese journalist would reply.

"Do you?"

"Oh we frequently draw attention to some inefficiency of a bureaucrat, or make some recommendation that might be carried out."

"Criticising a bureaucrat is not criticising the Government."

"He is part of the Government, and if he does not do his job properly then it is our duty to criticise him."

"Your duty?"

"Yes, in the same way as it is our duty to tell the truth."

"But are you able to criticise the Government's policy. The major items that it lays down, I mean. Not an individual bureaucrat?"

"I have said, we are free to do so."

"Do you?"

"You do not understand. The programme has been laid down, the Common Programme. It is the people's choice. They want that programme. Our Government is carrying out that programme. What is there for us to criticise?"

"But suppose the Government wants to make a change in the programme. Would you support the change?"

"I suppose so. You see, our Government is the Government of the people, and if it wanted to change some particular part of the programme, then it must be for the good of the people."

"Well then," I would try, "can you conceive the possibility of your having to criticise the Government?"

"No. I am a working man. It is my Government. How can I conceive that?"

"Surely you can imagine it. You are a journalist. You must have some imagination."

"My job is to deal with facts. I report what happens."

"Are you incapable of imagining a situation in which you were convinced that the Government was making a serious mistake?"

"If that happened, it would be my fault, some lack of understanding perhaps."

At about this stage, I would take a deep breath, have a couple of gambais to peaceful co-existence, and plunge in refreshed.

"No man is infallible?"

"None of us is perfect."

"Men may make mistakes?"

"Of course."

"The member of the Government could make a mistake?"

"I have said, we are free. We frequently criticise a bureaucrat."

"I'm not talking about a bloody bureaucrat. I'm talking about Chairman Mao, or Chou En-lai. Could they make mistakes?"

"You are a foreigner. You do not know what Mao Tse-tung has done for us."

"Is Mao Tse-tung infallible?"

"Ah, Mr. Gale," the sweet voice of Mr. Lee (or Mr. Chang or Mr. Cheng or the pale-faced girl from the same department) would interpose. "Let us not start an argument. Perhaps you have had too many gambais." This was a great joke. "Still, let us have another. To friendship between British and Chinese journalists!"

Reflections on the Water

WE TRAILED our fingers into the thick warm water of the West Lake in Hangchow. We were paddled slowly along in wide flat boats, with a white canvas awning with scalloped edges. A table between the pair of seats had bottles of mineral water on it. The worst heat of the afternoon had gone and soon the light would go too. Around the rim of the lake soft hills rose, and behind them higher, sharper mountains. They were not very high, but had the same effect of height that the Lake District hills have, and the same sharp and clear edge against the sky's light. They were coloured blue and green and the lake was grey and blue when the light was on it, but its water was heavy with loess and was therefore brown.

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Chang talked of the legends of Hangchow, pointed out to us each particular beauty spot, spoke of the poets who had discovered these spots and improved them and who had built the causeway, lined with trees and every fifty yards or so curving over a hump-backed bridge. He pointed to a monument on the top of a hillock. It had fallen down a few years ago, having stood for several centuries. Beneath it lived a snake, who once had turned into a beautiful woman with whom a nobleman's son had fallen in love. But the nobleman did not approve of the marriage and as he was also a priest he turned her back into a snake and built this monument above her and said that she would not be able to become a woman again until the monument fell down. On the top of another hill was a tall obelisk, proudly contributing to the sky-line. It was put up by a nobleman whose son had gone off to fight, to guide him home. But he had never returned. Heaven above, and Hangchow below: that, Chang said, is what the poets say of the West Lake.

We stopped and wandered in an ornamental garden, with curious deformed trees and rocks, and tiny winding paths climbing up little mounds. The Chinese love to make nature unnatural, and they do it with a perverse charm and at times almost wit. They showed us the lake within the lake, an artificial pool where fat goldfish lazed. They paddled us around three carved stone ornaments which rose out of the water, four or five feet high. They had been hollowed out, and holes were carved through them. When the moon shines, Chang told us, its light shines through the holes and makes a beautiful pattern on the lake. Here was an island, with a pavilion on it, and the edge of the island was bound with stone. There were villas, too, along the lake's edge, but out on stilts, whose fretwork roofs further elaborated the skyline, with gargoyles, mythical lions and the elaborate signs of their former owners.

The sun fell beneath the hills, and soon would drop over Hupeh and an hour or so later over Szechwan, Sinkiang and the upper reaches of the Yangtse and farthest Sinkiang, then, long after it was black here, would tumble into the vast tangled mountains of Tibet. The sky became a wonderful grey that I had never seen before, in which, as it were, all the atmosphere took its part and not only the most distant air. The pearly, translucent grey began above our heads, where the gnats hovered, and each dusty drop of air played its part and you seemed to see through an infinity of these dusty drops till suddenly a drop became bright and was some unknown star. Then in the east, coming from it, long rays of lighter silver grey spread out across the sky, as if the sun so lately gone in the west had sped around the world and this moment would return to Hangchow. This was a rare sight, they told us, long known about but seldom seen, and was a presage of good luck. The only noise was the lapping of the water, and suddenly a fat fish leaped out and the black water was alive with flakes of white.

North for fifteen hundred miles, north-west for two thousand five hundred miles, south-west for two thousand miles stretched the lands which at various times had been part of the Chinese Empire. There were deserts in it, and part of the world's greatest accumulation of mountains; great rivers, too, the Yangtse and the more treacherous Yellow river; parched lands and thick steaming jungles; but for the most part there was China proper, the great alluvial basins of the two rivers, and their tributaries. The land was fertile and bore, indeed, the world's greatest single concentration of population. It bore also, and had done so for three thousand years, its most permanent single civilisation. Around the lake that civilisation had left its little mementos, scattered on the tops of hillocks. It was a civilisation as remarkable for its permanence and impermeability as anything else. Greece had held its brief sway, Rome its greater one; Islam had spread its vast wings and had burned them almost off and Christendom had flourished over the medieval West; barbarians had been civilised and had created newer empires, and each of these was different from the rest. The West had had its famous renaissance, when Greece was wrongly thought to flourish again in less hospitable climates; and its Reformation, also. And along with these convulsions Western ships had scurried the oceans and begun America and Africa and touched upon the Far East. Once or twice

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the West had dreamed of a universal imperium: Rome had thought of it, and that medieval Christendom had, for all it knew, almost achieved it. Yet all the while, only half-known, or known by distant repute of visitors or legends or the practical versions of traders, China had lived too. It had had its dynasties, its revolutions of power, its mild conflicts of ideas, yet it had remained almost inviolated from without even as much as its internal palace revolutions had left intact the fabric of its society. Then in a few years, a hundred or so, not much more, China was conquered from without and then from within by the West and and what had been and is incomparably the world's greatest revolution was being accomplished. I dislike superlatives; they smack of undue excitement and also of inaccuracy, yet this must be incontestable, that of all the world's revulsions and revolts, none has been greater in its nature and extent than this in China.

For the present establishment of Communism and order in China I do not think there is any exact parallel at all. Islam had a rapid conquest, but that was subjugation. The barbarians destroyed Rome but they did not rebuild it. The Russian revolution was on an altogether smaller scale, and although there also an effete Empire was replaced after foreign and civil war by Communism and order the Marxist theory of the Russian State was part of the Western, the Russian experience, was not entirely alien. There is yet another unique aspect of the Chinese revolution, and that is that in its final few years—from 1948 to the present—it has made China a major world power in the Western sense of the word, and that it has never been before.

And there I was, trailing my fingers in the waters of the West Lake, listening to Chang's sing-song voice telling me the fairy tales of the past and seeing the landscape gardening of men from the Sung dynasty disclose each beauty spot around me. This was almost the only time for relaxation we had, the only time to collect our thoughts, to realise the magnitude of which we had seen a microcosm. Here, too, lulled by the water and the loveliness of that grey sky, it seemed that it might after all be true that everything changes and everything is the same and that the more things change the more they are the same: because the trees did not suddenly turn red or the water as solid as stone, or because Chang had not forgotten the fairy stories he had learned as a child. Yet he had changed, I imagine. He it was who had insisted that we leave Shanghai. He it was also who, when we went looking at the shops in Hangchow, and MacColl had wanted to take a picture of him with Ridley and me, had refused, explaining that he did not come out well in photographs. We discovered that other Chinese in our party claimed to be equally vain. It was Lee, when we got to Canton, who especially came round and collected all undeveloped rolls of film so that they might be developed before we left. It is a trivial matter, no doubt, but it is not pleasant to listen to a soft and cultured voice sweetly tell stories of the past, and make small jokes about them, and share toasts with us, force them on us, indeed; and refuse to be photographed with us. He, too, had been convulsed when China was and because he had changed or had become different from what he otherwise would have been, born at a different time, then China had changed. So it seemed to me, although I did not know what China had been like or what Chang might have been.

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Kenneth Tynan

Bull Fever

ONE goes to Madrid not to look but to listen; the eye, once pacified by the Prado, can rest without loss behind sunglasses. The modern part of the city, which is most of it, acts as a mart rather than a Mecca for tourism; here you bathe and shave, make reservations, buy clothes for the south, eat lavishly, and call for the English-speaking doctor, who restores intestinal friction with a dark, gritty porridge. Madrid is a city perpetually under construction, where housing developments refuse to develop and planning schemes plot their own frustration; from the amount of scaffolding, and the number of deserted cement-mixers and piles of abandoned bricks, you would think its suburbs were peripatetic, their destinies in the hands of men paid to keep them, stone by stone, in motion. At head-height all is clean, bright plateau air, but dust ambles around the ankles. Busy, official, social, and sensual, Madrid has never had time to become a showplace. Instead, it is a sounding-board for the noisy, fatiguing variety of Spanish conversation, which devotes itself to what William Styron, the American novelist, has described as the writer's five main preoccupations: Love Requited, Love Unrequited, Death, Insult, and Hilarity.

I had a week to spare before the Valencian fair began, and two novilladas to see, one in the Madrid ring of Las Ventas, and the other sixty miles away at Segovia, where the cartel was to include Pedrés and Jumillano, the young lions of the season. Meanwhile I eavesdropped, most fruitfully, on the foreign aficionados in the bar of the Palace Hotel. Multilingual bull-talk may be heard here any time from March to September, but the climax is reached in May, when Madrid celebrates the *feria* of San Isidro. Then, alive with an almost proprietary zeal, the French contingent arrives, sallow and learned, taking its tauromachy very seriously and insisting on the use of classical bullfight terminology in all discussions. The corrida has, after all, penetrated as far north as Bordeaux; it is gaining ground all the time, and French bullfight critics, secure in the terrible finality of utterance to which their tongue lends itself, write with a frankness seldom achieved by their more partial Spanish colleagues. Occasionally an English aficionado breaks through the currency barrier and goes to the fights, wrestling spasmodically with his sense of shame and his love of horses, items of psychological luggage which seem overwhelmingly important after a bad corrida, and irrelevant after a good one. But for every Englishman there are fifty Americans with bull fever; it is too often our habit, as it is rarely theirs, to condemn things unseen. A visit to a bullfight is an emotional experiment which the English fear to risk. The Americans, surprised legatees of that store of energy and elasticity which has been moving mysteriously westward ever since the heyday of Greek civilisation, have no such qualms. They accept and embrace the bullfight, some for the right reasons, others because it can all too easily be absorbed, along with big-game hunting and whaling, into the curious religion of toughness, and others again because it is expensive and spectacular to photograph.

There are the rich and retired, with a

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metabolism attuned to manzanilla and elaborate mid-Atlantic accents ("Litri's a *tarny* little chap, practically a midget, but such artistry! If he were British you'd have *narded* him by now!"); there are college girls on the Grand Tour who saw one bullfight in France and cancelled their reservations in Rome in order to follow the bulls south; there are picaresque vagabonds spending dollars which they earned on the construction of airfields in North Africa; and there are employees of the predominantly bull-mad United States consulates. All are enthusiasts, exhausting themselves by the effort of wanting the fights to be good: "I saw Vázquez last month, and, my God, you talk about guts? Here's what I say to anybody who tries to tell me it's cruel. Just get in there with those bulls, if you love them so damn much. Just get in there. And *brother*. . . ."

A common tableau is that in which a young, crew-cut novice tries out his aficion on an older expatriate, whose smudged-ochre eyeballs and rusty complexion tell of long addiction to the Spanish way of life. The acolyte has been explaining, with broad gestures and headshakes expressive of rueful wonder, his admiration for the valour of Pedrés—"And then he got it, right in the gut, and so help me he got right back on his feet and went through with the kill——" The older man nods wisely:

"Yeah, I heard he was good that afternoon. Trouble with that boy, he'll never learn how to coast. Just won't take it easy. I've told him a million times. 'Relax, baby, relax': but no, he's got this Spanish pride and he stays as tensed-up as a watch-spring."

"You know him, huh?"

"Know him?" A huge commiserating grin. "Why, we've broken bread with the guy, haven't we, Daisy?"

Daisy is his wife, startlingly pretty with dark hair in a bun. Looking nervously up from the Paris *Herald Tribune*, she supports the half-truth:

"Sure—sure we have!"

After all, they arrived at the party only a matter of seconds after Pedrés left.

"Pedrés," continues her husband, with pedagogic emphasis on the second syllable, "P'drace is my boy, kind of a protégé of mine. Carlos Arruza and I went up to a *tienta* in Salamanca two winters ago, and there was this skinny little kid, shaking in his shoes and looking like a breath of wind'd knock him over. Well, I took one good look at him and I said to Carlos, 'I know what you're thinking, but you're wrong. The kid's got what it takes.' Well, Carlos kidded me for a while—Carlos is a great kidder—but sure enough when P'drace got out there with the muleta, that crowd simply went crazy."

"I saw Arruza in Mexico," says crew-cut. "You known him long?"

"Honey, Arruza"—pronounced Arootza—"Arootza and me are like that. Carlos would cut his right arm for me. And as for Daisy—why, the guy is just wild about her, do anything for her, isn't that so, Daisy?"

And Daisy, remembering a polite handshake in an airport waiting-room, wishfully agrees.

SNOBBISM of this sort is the occupational disease of the foreign aficionado. Not to have attended a *tienta*, the trial of young fighting cows which takes place on the ranches during the winter and early spring, is a fearful stigma, almost as bad as not having run before the bulls at Pamplona. Since the death of Manolete at Linares in 1947, there is little point in claiming to have known him; everybody does it, from Orson Welles (who actually did know him) to the cloakroom attendant at any Madrid café. A sciolistic acquaintance with a few great 19th century names—Mazzantini, Lagartijo, Frascuelo—is *de rigueur*; and to have known someone who was in the Madrid arena when Granero was mortally gored in 1922 is practically compulsory. Of matadors living but retired, some degree of familiarity with Belmonte and Rafael El Gallo is essential, and it is advisable to refer to Belmonte by his nickname "Terremoto," which means earthquake. It is no longer fashionable to describe the bullfight as "basically a sacrificial rite" the preferred phrase is "a kind of balletic hunt." One should also observe from time to time that the *fiesta brava* is in decay, that Manolete ruined it, and that nobody has killed *recibiendo* since 1925. The aficionado's preparation, *mutatis mutandis*, is curiously similar to that of the dramatic critic.

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The study of bullfighting is all niceties, fine technical points which the English language must struggle to convey, and the number of English-speaking authorities is necessarily small. Hemingway, in spite of an absence from Spain which lasted from the civil war to the summer of 1953, thereby denying him access to the thrones of Manolete and Luis Miguel Dominguín, is among the few who combine passion with genuine knowledge; a tauriform titan with a schoolboy's enthusiasms, a prefect's prejudices, and a games master's geniality. Another real devotee is John Marks, the author of that fine handbook *To The Bullfight*, whose appearance, pouchy and reposeful, puts one in mind of the Rembrandt self-portrait in the Prado with the whiskers shaved off. Crustily holding court at a café on the Gran Via, Marks hits the manner of Spanish bull-critics off to perfection, speaking of contemporary toreros as of a gang of unruly children whose caprices may be tolerated and condoned but never mistaken for absolute virtues. It is Marks's misfortune to have acquired an unchallengeable expertise on a subject about which his compatriots are profoundly incurious. But neither he nor Hemingway can compete in length of service with an indomitable and (I swear) non-fictional Englishwoman whom I call Lady Black.

Lady Black saw her first bullfight shortly after the armistice of 1918, and aficion instantly took possession of her soul. No woman for half-measures, she determined to spread the word abroad and, backing up her imperfect Spanish with all the tenacious optimism of Pont Street, assembled three inexpensive matadors, their protesting cuadrillas, and a small herd of groggy bulls. These she transported, with a display of organising ability which would have done credit to Hannibal, across the south of France into Italy, where they arrived by train in the summer of 1923. Overwhelming the authorities with her title, her rhetoric, and her refusal to be discouraged, she succeeded in presenting twenty-seven slightly ragged bullfights in the velodromes of Turin, Milan, Bologna, and Naples. Understandably elated, she laid plans to repeat the expedition a year later, only to be foiled by unyielding opposition from the Roman Catholic Church, which, though it expressed no objection to the impaling of bulls, took the view that fighting them was tantamount to committing suicide and ought therefore to be prohibited. This attitude must have worried some of the troupe, fearful for their souls, but it had no effect whatever on Lady Black, whose Empire-building forebears had taught her to display nothing but amused indifference when faced with hostile tribal tabus. Her caravan was already approaching the Italian frontier when the velodrome proprietors cancelled their contracts. Rather than retreat, she continued defiantly eastwards, passing with her bulls, horses, and men straight through northern Italy to the Balkans. The men, whose morale she describes as splendid, were nevertheless becoming difficult to discipline; some of them, in spite of her expostulations, firmly regarded the entire safari as an elaborate game in which no holds were barred, and every time the train pulled into a station there were playful attempts to disgorge a bull or two into the midst of the crowds on the platform. By keeping her wits about her and bribing the mutineers with money and wine, Lady Black managed to escort her party as far as Budapest, where it disembarked, blind drunk, in the early autumn of 1924. Sensing that no time was to be lost if the boys were to be dissuaded from running amuck, she at once took a short lease on an athletics stadium just outside the city. Here, magnificently, she held six formal corridas of bulls, over which she presided, a Junoesque Madam Chairman with a fan rendered prettily redundant by the icy east wind. The Hungarian audiences, she says, took to bullfighting "like ducks to water," and the fits of mystified acclamation with which they greeted each pass ring still in her ears. Her mission accomplished, she received from the mayor what may have been either a decoration or a small fingerbowl, and returned to England for the grouse season. She left the railway tickets for her band of tourist executioners in the care of the senior matador, but it was many weeks before they made use of them. Some, indeed, never came back to Spain; the hospitality of Hungarian hostesses is a byword in the Balkans, and to

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Lady Black, contentedly banging away in her shooting-box, there filtered through disquieting rumours about chandeliers smashed, duels fought, and homes wrecked by her impetuous troupe. Swallowing her qualms, she sent kind messages of disbelief to her informants, begging them not to repeat idle gossip. The experience, however, must have shaken her, for she has revisited Hungary never, and Spain seldom. Since the civil war she has banished herself from the bulls completely, but her aficion still burns. You may still meet her at small parties in Kensington, to which, on occasion, she brings her guitar; and, with any luck, as the night wears on, nostalgia will sweep over her and she will sing, in an ululation throaty but sweet, as much as she can remember of the flamenco chants which beguiled that terrible train journey thirty years ago. The idea of a bullfight on ice, which I once propounded to her, did not strike her as in the least bizarre. She is a marvellous woman.

THE Madrid novillada was held on Thursday, which thus took on the familiar shape of a bullfight day—a slow, tedious parabola mounting to the fight, and a precipitate slump after it. Abstract thought is an impossibility on bullfight days: two questions rap hard on the mind: whether the rain will hold off, and whether the wind will drop. At five, restlessly, one joins the honking queue of cars lining the Calle de Alcalá, which leads out to the bullring; the pavements are already full of fast-walking crowds, the men predominantly in blue, that bilious shade which is the trade-mark of cheap Spanish tailoring, and the women pouter-pigeoned in black and crested with mantillas. Though the air is electric, the streets are not as jammed as they would be for a football match. Spanish *futbolistas* easily outnumber the aficionados; the two largest bullrings in Spain, that of Las Ventas in Madrid and the Monumental in Barcelona, hold respectively 23,000 and 20,000 spectators, who would look like gnat-rain on a wedding-cake if spread out on the stands of an international football stadium.

The seats at Las Ventas rise steeply from the sand, giving to the place an intent, focused look which is somehow reflected in the audience. This is the Cathedral of Tauromachy, the end of the pilgrimage; here the matador's visa to glory must finally be stamped; and there is none of Pamplona's tipsiness or Valencia's partisanship. The fight I saw, a minor affair, was nonetheless conducted in a spectral, concentrated hush. A special pathos attaches to the effort of novilleros to prove themselves; I remembered the agony of José Gutiérrez Somoza, who, in April 1947, made his début in a fight at Zamora, displaying such terror and incompetence that he was taken to prison and fined 3,000 pesetas for cheating the public. After a disaster like that, unless one is gifted with the unearthly aplomb of a Cagancho or a Luis Procuna, one cannot live easily. Cagancho and Procuna brush off their disgraces with a shrug, but Gutiérrez Somoza, having once been seen naked and shaking, concluded that he did not wish to be seen anywhere again, and on June 26th of the same year committed suicide.

None of the three novilleros cut an ear, but none of them disgraced himself; the fight was taut and exciting, largely because of the contrast between Navarrito, a Sevillian boy with the sober style of Ronda, and Joselito Torres, a Venezuelan with all the venturesome lightness of Seville. It is, of course, an anachronism to speak of Seville and Ronda as "schools" of bullfighting; Ronda has not produced a torero of much quality since Niño de la Palma, and today there are more madrileño bullfighters than sevillanos. Even so, the terms have their uses, as convenient abbreviations, and that is why they persist. The third fighter was Fernando Jiménez, Manolo González's younger brother, moderately brave, but irremediably clumsy with the muleta; and the Yaguë bulls had, as one journalist wrote afterwards, "*poca casta y no mucha carne*"—little breeding and not much meat. What gave the afternoon its dignity was the spectacle of Navarrito and Torres controlling their nerves, steadying their bodies to let opposed traditions speak through their youth. The line of his limbs and the strength of his wrist are all a matador has with which to set a signature on his work; and the signature must not offend decorum with its flamboyancy.

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As Orson Welles puts it, each passing of the bull must announce "not *who I am*, but *what we are*."

Navarrito, wearing a black arm-band in memory of his father, who had died a few days before, was tall and possessed drooping, waxen eyelids like those of a saint in effigy. With his first bull, a cowardly and short-winded little brute, he declared himself: a poker-faced but passionate dominator. His opening veronicas were admonitions to the bull's vivacity, schoolmaster's passes, and when Torres danced in with some cheeky chicuelinas during the picking, it was as if a child had thumbed his nose while the teacher's back was turned. Navarrito scowled loftily, and the scowl deepened when he saw that the bull was cheating him of his faena by refusing to take the picks. Nor would more than two of the banderillas stay in place: had the creature rubber withers? Navarrito, giving nothing away of his rage, unfurled the muleta and began with four slow, perfect naturals which must have astonished the bull; in the same mood of entranced lethargy he shifted to the right hand, patiently instructing the volatile animal to stay on course. After repeating both series of passes he seemed certain of an ear, but ruined his chances with a bad, nervous kill. His second bull was a menace, an irrational, high-chopping pick-hater which his technique was not good enough to master; imagine Clyde Beatty given ten minutes to teach a man-eating tiger to jump through hoops, and you have some idea of Navarrito's problem. His peons loyally mimed extreme fright, vaulting in and out of the ring at the least provocation to indicate to the crowd how anxious they were for their employer's safety, but it was no use: Navarrito was baffled. Nothing beautiful could be done with the creature: this was bullfighting as an English audience might enjoy it, an approximately equal contest in which man and bull looked equally stupid, and I hated it as much as Navarrito did. He killed, furiously and in great peril, at the second thrust.

Little Torres likewise lost heart with his second bull, a vague perambulator; he yelled shrilly at it like a man hailing a passing cab, but failed to attract and hold its attention. Embellishment, not domination, is his forte, as he had already shown in his first bull, by far the best of the afternoon; a ready charger of which he took advantage to the extent of six impudent veronicas and a sweeping farol, threatening to submerge himself in the folds of the cape like a Boy Scout beneath a collapsed tent in a storm. The picadors and banderilleros did their work admirably, and for a moment Torres stood in their shadow, Gulliver in Brobdingnag; then, jauntily, he sprang out with the muleta and easily roused the olés. Bullfighting achieves its proper beauty only when the rhythm of the contest transcends its danger, when you are lulled by the fighter's skill into forgetfulness of the risks he is taking. Of this beauty Torres was not old enough to be capable: a swift, agile stylist, he is effective in fragments but worlds away from Navarrito's sinister, compelling sloth. Citing the bull square-shouldered, he gave us naturals and then passes *en redondo*, followed by high *derechazos* and a couple of ill-timed *desplantes*; the whole faena being chancy, disorganised, and much applauded. "*Il ne leur importe*," said Samuel Sorbière, a French visitor to London in 1667, of English theatregoers, "*que ce soit un pot-pourri, parce qu'ils n'en regardent, disent-ils, qu'une partie après l'autre, sans se soucier du total.*" This is equally true of modern bullfight audiences, and it is getting truer every season; the longest cheers go to the pot-pourri experts, such as Pedrés or Chicuelo II, who specialise in disconnected bursts of emotion, rather than to the patient, progressive craftsmen who match their methods to the bull and, working within a strictly limited area, impose on the faena a total shape which stays in the mind after individual passes have faded. Yet Torres's whirlwind improvisations were what the public wanted, and had he not bungled the kill the award of an ear would have been inevitable. This kind of modern bullfighting—which is four-fifths of it—might be described as classical bullfighting reflected in a smashed mirror. It would not be too much to say that the ideal bullfighter is one who puts into practice the Stoic tenet of *apatheia* as Lionel Trilling defines it: "The principled refusal to experience more emotion than is forced upon one, the rejection of sensibility

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as a danger to the integrity of the self." In the persistence of their appeal to and dependence on sensibility, toreros of Pedrés's sort become the sentimentalists of the bullring. Intent on fraying our nerves, they debauch our vision. A perfect faena imprints on the consciousness a pattern almost abstract, the pattern of Senecan Stoicism as one finds it in the last act of a tragedy, when the hero stares death in the eyes, and conquers it through indifference. Your Stoic *in extremis* does not exclaim: "See how terribly I am threatened! See what risks I am running! It will be a miracle if I survive!" He says, in effect: "There is no terror. I run no risk that is not of my choosing. I shall survive." This is the statement made by a good bullfighter on his best days, the affirmation that one goes to the bullring to hear.

AFTER a corrida, as Jimmy Durante says in another context, food becomes secondary. It was half-past midnight, late even for Spain, before I dined, my companion being an American script-writer who revealed that he shared my own bewitched admiration for the English menus so thoughtfully provided by many Spanish restaurants. He cited a wine-list in Barcelona which offered "Xeres from Sherry of the Frontier." I replied with a *trouvaille* from San Sebastian. It had begun, quietly enough, with "Several Kinds of Shells" and "Calamary in his Own Ink"—*calamares en su tinta*. Then, suddenly, the mystery sprang upon one: "Anahogs in a Seamanlike Manner." I never discovered what these were, and did not dare to ask, lest they should be brought (or led) snarling and clanking and hornpiping to the table. I carry at the back of my mind an image of an anahog, feral and shipshape, which comes saluting into my dreams, disrupting every banquet my subconscious prepares for me. Perhaps this was a vestigial anahog, a corruption of an earlier "anchovy" which the scribe, in his ignorance, had confused: I do not know, and it would take a textual critic to find out. At all events, the San Sebastian translator kept up a high standard throughout, ending with a notable flourish on:

FRUITS OF THE SEASON
TART OF THE HOUSE

I am not sure, though, that I do not prefer the *carte* gleaned by my friend in Santander, which included a frugal "Ham with Pea," some pleasantly homely "Cow-Chops," and the macabre recommendation, as *spécialité de la maison*, of "Toadstool Omelette."

We discussed the novillada at length, went on to the style of the Sevillian fantastiks in general, and then by what seemed a natural progression, found ourselves talking about Chaplin. I had noticed this happening before, in many other conversations; there is an undoubted kinship between the tidy skippings of the fastidious little tramp, his alertness in avoiding disaster by ducking under a beefy arm or sliding down a drain-pipe, and the equally slick manœuvres of Sevillian toreros eluding the horns. What W. C. Fields said of Chaplin has been echoed by many American aficionados speaking of Manolo Vázquez: "The guy's a goddamn ballet-dancer." In both cases the man exposes himself, in a spirited, volatile, balletic manner, to all kinds of danger, and emerges unhurt. The quiet, withdrawn Ronda style has nothing of this: there is philosophy in it, something more august and profoundly moral than the practical, life-loving shrug of the Sevillians. With the *rondeño* fighter the bull takes on a majesty it seldom achieves with a Sevillian, to whom it is merely a threat to be skirted as glibly and neatly as human reflexes will permit. Hence tragedy belongs to Ronda, because tragedy is not, as a rule, animated or vivacious but still and reflective. Ronda is imaginative and classical; Seville is fanciful and baroque. The distinction is much the same as that which can be drawn between *cante hondo*, the pure form of Andalusian song, and *cante flamenco*, its more popular derivative. The Sevillian (not Hemingway's horse) is the true comedian of the bullfight; his pre-eminent quality is not so much courage as pluck; he charms rather than binds a spell.

He reminds one, not too distantly, of the clown-bullfighters who somersault baggy-trousered over the horns of yearling calves in the arc-lit circus spectacles which invade many bullrings during fiesta weeks, offering a nocturnal parody of the afternoon's serious business. And here we are back once more to Chaplin,

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for comic bullfights, known as *charlotadas*, were invented in direct imitation of Chaplin's early one-reelers. The first and greatest of the Chaplinesque toreros was Carmelo Tusquellas "Charlot," who made his début as a burlesque matador, complete with bowler, cane, moustache, and high-buttoned frock-coat, in Barcelona on May 8th, 1916; his success was immediate, and the local impresario, Eduardo Pagés, at once formed a full comic cuadrilla. In addition to Charlot, he engaged Rafael Dutrus "Llapisera," already well known as a taurine *farceur*. Llapisera's trick was to enter the ring clad in flawless evening dress with what Cossío, the historian of bullfighting, describes as "all the seriousness of an English humorist." The combination of Llapisera and Charlot (who must have resembled Keaton and Chaplin) was irresistible, and the team was and is widely mimicked. So that in linking Chaplin with bullfighting I am merely repeating what Pagés intuitively spotted nearly forty years ago. In his celerity, his serio-comic delicacy when matched with a mighty Mephistophelean bruiser, Chaplin behaves much as a *torero sevillano* behaves in the presence of a bull. We laugh at Chaplin because the peril is artificial; the bullfighter, on the other hand, may be killed before our eyes. Though one smiles at Sevillian antics, one is always conscious that one's amusement is a form of *Galgenhumor*.

It is appropriate that Chaplin's most celebrated party-turn, never seen on the screen, should be an impersonation of a nervy matador. And it is equally revealing when a recent biographer, Robert Payne, quotes him as saying of the tramp-character he originated: "I am always aware that Charlie is playing with death. He plays with it, mocks it, thumbs his nose at it, but it is always there. He is aware of death at every moment of his existence; and he is terribly aware of being alive."

Another actor who uses a Sevillian approach to drama is Jean-Louis Barrault, a brilliant mime, tumbler, talker, and thinker whose stage presence is nevertheless without real weight. He and Chaplin have much more in common with each other and the bullfight than they have with, say, Olivier in the great days of his *Oedipus Rex*. For a hint of the ideal *rondeño* actor, one must go to John Gielgud, whose style is surgical in its detachment, nobly removed from the tumult; like Manolete, he has a way of sadly averting his head, as if something malodorous offended him, whenever the character he is playing is beset by danger, blood, death, or the loss of a job. And though he lacks Manolete's baleful compassion, he shares with him the knowledge that he is a cynosure on whom the impressionable will model their ideals of human dignity. Gielgud's remoteness, his commanding poise are the marks of the swordsmen of Ronda. Their pride, the pride of men able to dominate through the mind rather than the muscles, informs and vivifies all he does.

Toughness, it should by now be clear, is no part of a bullfighter's equipment; many of the best have been tubercular or syphilitic. No aggressively masculine skills are required for the job; indeed, if a torero's work announces too blatantly his gender, it often militates against the best of which he is capable, as if a painter were to assert that he was a man first, and an artist second. This is not to say that there are more effeminates in bullfighting than in any other profession involving self-exhibition. It is simply to suggest that interpretative art, particularly in such a stylised form as the bullfight, does not depend on the projection of the executant's sex. Universality is aided by ambiguity. We laugh at a comedian when he exposes the feminine traits which lie beneath the masculine appearance; when Bob Hope, having bragged of his fearlessness, screams at the sight of a mouse; when Jack Benny broods about crows-feet and thinning hair; or when Sid Field dons his velvet coat and transforms himself into a fairy-legged photographer. Chaplin, especially in his early films, is the arch-effeminate of comedy: observe the bashful hunching of the shoulders and the girlish grin with which he accepts an unexpected compliment, and notice how, in *The Cure*, he squirms with coyness when constrained to undress in the men's changing room. In all acting where finesse is uppermost, there is a female spring in the mechanism, and this is true of the bullfight since Belmonte developed it from a hunt into a form of self-expression.

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Anyone whose business is the study of human behaviour in a crisis—and this of course includes actors—can learn a great deal from the corrida. Ristori once nettled Coquelin by declaring that to simulate an emotion it was necessary for an actor to have experienced it; to which Coquelin replied: "Yes, madame—but I have often seen you die!", thus ending the dispute. Myself, I think Ristori was in error, for I have seen too many actors "feeling" an emotion so intensely that they were quite unable to communicate it; but I believe she might have answered Coquelin's point if she had remembered the bullfight. At the climax of a good faena, you know precisely how a man looks and behaves and, with cognate clarity, something of what he feels and thinks in the presence of death. An actor might play Cyrano better for having seen Cagancho in the ring, alternating the high jinks of comedy with tragic pride; and anyone contemplating Mio in Maxwell Anderson's *Winterset* and wondering how to cope with the death-shrouded last act would be well advised to watch Litri facing a Murube bull. When you have seen that, you know a little about dying.

A DEEP mistrust of rubble-spattered Spanish roads and wine-flown English drivers moved me to take the train to Segovia. Halfway there, a sudden hailstorm sent knobs of ice as big as knuckles clattering down on to the starved Castilian plain, and I had a twinge of aficionado *Angst*: a black cloud on bullfight day is as bad as a burst blood-vessel. But the sky was soon wiped blue, and I spent the rest of the trip quarrelling with an English-speaking Spaniard, who maintained that the bullfight was barbarous, though he had seen only one, and that a good one, in which eight ears were cut. Though I protested, I could not help seeing his point, against which there is no fool-proof argument. There will always be those to whom the thought of a bullfight is *per se* repellent, like an unopened book whose contents are reputed to be pornographic. No matter how hard such people try to keep their eyes impartial, prejudice betrays them; the obscenity leaps out from the page, vile and glaring, and even if their deeper judgement pronounces it not obscenity at all but an essential detail of a great design, they will ever afterwards think of the volume as a dirty book, and themselves as slightly contaminated by contact with it. The censor in one's mind is as capricious and twice as inconsistent as the Lord Chamberlain, and his power is absolute.

All the same, I should quake to see him evicted, and the bullfight held to be a pansy pursuit, which is what Nero or Caligula would have thought it. Reading Suetonius's gossip about the midnight games in which Nero, dressed in a lionskin, would roar through the arena savaging the flesh of tethered slaves, I try to isolate the qualities which make this revolting and the bullfight acceptable. Both involve bloodshed; both are intended to enliven an audience; and both are exhibitions of fundamentally needless cruelty. In both cases, pain is publicly inflicted, and no apologist for the bullfight, however strong his convictions, could reasonably offer as a moral justification the excuse that animals feel pain less intensely than human beings. I have no respect for the the aficionado who fails to argue the matter out with himself, though I have to admit I do not know the solution. Must one go to the awful length of saying that, in the case of the bullfight, the end justifies the means? Which implies agreement with the view of Ximenes, that the unification of Spanish worship justified the Inquisition: a hard doctrine for most of us. When all the debating points have been made, I am still unable to reconcile the logical reasons for loathing the corrida, which are as logical as the reasons for loathing horror-camps or the building of the Pyramids, with my own obstinate awareness that it represents for me a summit of human aspiration.

On two questions, however, the dispute on the train helped me to make up my mind. My opponent scoffed at the notion that bullfighting was an art; and at bottom, though I offered a token shriek of scorn, I found myself of his opinion. It is not an art in itself, but the cause that art is in other men—poets, for example, painters, sculptors, and musicians. The matador is not, by any definition that pretends to strictness, an artist any more than Beowulf or Odysseus were artists: like them he is an epic

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adventurer in whose deeds there is enormous incidental beauty, whose life is the raw material for an unwritten narrative poem, a *Belmontiad* or *Litriad* in embryo.

Shifting his fire, the Spaniard next insinuated that there was a strong element of overt sexuality in bullfighting, a line of argument so naïve that I almost asked him how much overt sexuality he thought there was in the annual championships at Bisley. Nobody denies that Nero's cannibal frolicking had a specific sexual purpose; and it is certainly possible to read sexual symbolism into the events of a bullfight—I know a girl whose psychiatrist told her that the bull represented her mother and the matador her father, adding that she herself was the horse. But it is nonsense to hold that algolagnia, sexual pleasure in the infliction of pain, plays any part in the ritual; the corrida is never, in the ordinary sense, sadistic.

On the other hand, in another, more precise sense of the word, it is sublimely, even exultantly sadistic. Mr. Geoffrey Gorer has defined de Sade's general philosophy as one of "pleasure in the ego's modification of the external world." This pleasure can—and in de Sade's case did—lead to indulgence in pyromania and kindred fantasies: but it is present, less aggressively, in most of us. And nothing satisfies it better than the sight of a man demonstrating his mastery over a force as objective and uncompromising as a fighting bull. Some of us, finding nobility in the spectacle, can accordingly cite as our text: "The admiration of the noble draws us upwards." Others, finding nothing there but self-indulgence, turn away in horror and all efforts to convert them are wasted. The question of bullfighting probes spots so sore that for the aficionado Jowett's advice is perhaps the best. Never apologise, never explain.

Horoscope

When, at such hour that we meet to change our myth,
Assure and calculate our dreams with money,
Merger fates, then troop from the darkened café:
You whom now I do not know shall be
My great, predominating Venus;
I, your Mars. Our influential way—
Half war and half in love—shall change, and change.

For lo! the starless and the starry streets
Shall lose the navigator's fix and count.
With new, with unknown numbers willingly appear
(And run to north and south) the avenues
With future names. We, each other following
Through all the other fables fixed for ever,
Believe our own more free.
But dawn reveals
The crystalline Apollo; night brings dim Phoebe,
Orion's bands, Libra's blindfold, Cancer's
Claw, and Scorpion's eternal poison.

Richard Selig

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William Sansom *a story*

A Visit to the Dentist

"FEEL anything now?"

"A little," he lied. With every second gained the anæsthetic would take a surer hold: how could he be certain the dentist had prodded him in exactly the most sensitive place? Better to make sure.

He lay back in the chair with his mouth still wide open—and in that tormented position, and with his startled staring eyes, anyone who knew Pemberton would have thought him to be smiling, for he had naturally that way of smiling, when he smiled he made this unnatural face of horror, bared teeth and pop-eyes—Pemberton lay back thus and watched the high window-framed patch of darkening sky: the same quietly clouded sky that would soon turn pink, or pall to a winter's mauve over Kew, dear safe Kew, faraway Kew with its quiet gardens and his homely turreted house. His house would be sitting there all this time, knowing nothing of its master's predicament.

But the dentist was back again prodding, this time nonchalantly, without asking what was felt, and before Pemberton could speak or even make his delaying noise, a deep-groaned guttural vowel, a hand was over his mouth concealing—kind conjuror!—the wink of a bright instrument, a white arm was braced dark against the sky, he heard inside his ears a crunching, felt nothing, saw the arm arc swiftly back to place something on the tray, then instantly brace back again, brace, crunch, arc, brace, crunch, arc, five times, and so expertly that Pemberton could make no sound, his mouth in any case immobilised wide, and then his head was gently pushed forward and the dentist, with the grave knowing smile reserved to his calling, was saying, "Would you spit, please?" and out of his mouth into the glass bowl with its little circular hiss of water he saw his blood drop, not with horror, but with a beautiful relief. He had felt nothing. Condemned, he had been reprieved. He looked up at the dentist with worship of such dexterity, with love. This passed quickly to a sensation of personal bravery. "I got through. It was nothing." He felt like a man who has pulled somebody from the Thames and slips anonymous away from his congratulators.

But the dentist was already inserting a machine in his mouth, a contrivance he was destined to live with for every hour of what he could not but think of as his "new life."

A manipulation of fingers. Out came the machine again. A little chiselling with the drill, a bit off here, a little there—the room was suddenly a kind of pottery school—and at last the set, the bridgework, the denture was judged perfect.

"How d'you feel?" asked the dentist.

"Fine," Pemberton whistled.

"You'll feel it a bit later," the dentist sympathised, handing him a little envelope of pills. "Take a couple of these, they'll make you more comfortable."

"Thank you." And again that astonishing whistle.

His jaw was still dead, but already the sensitive tongue was at work, licking like a ferrety tentacle at this big hard new thing in his mouth, astounded at the bulk of it —and with this his spirit of bravery sank. Could one keep such an alien edifice in one's mouth? And would this dreadful whistle continue? He turned to the dentist and, for something to say, whistled: "I feel like a cage in a bird."

At which they all smiled, and after the final instructions, Pemberton was out in the street, coated and hatted, and looking on the ordinary pavement like any ordinary man.

HE WALKED out into Wigmore Street and whistled for an evening paper. The man seemed to notice nothing odd. Pemberton had wondered at first if he would stare curiously, or laugh, but when neither of

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these things happened, when the man simply went on shouting WAPPING PIER SENSATION POLICE COMB SHADWELL—instead of wondering in his usual vague way what overweight peer (the enormous Lord Shadwell?) had his hair done at Scotland Yard, instead of his usual dismay at the amount you are expected to understand in this enormously parochial modern world, Pemberton felt rise in him a tearful desire to tell the man what had happened to him, the news momentous that here was he, Pemberton, at a definite moment of life, having parted with five of his own well-used most personal incisors and molars to make way for a plate of false ones—a critical moment in life which he had heard referred to, with felicity but some omen, as "the change-over."

But Pemberton would never have spoken thus to a newspaperman, or to any stranger—he was by nature recessive, a slow-speaking, slow-thinking man of retired habit. Equally, the newspaperman would have shown no interest in his news—he would probably have reacted like the shop-keeper to whom one boasts of a long holiday abroad and whose only reply is: "Thought I hadn't seen you the last day or two." People were always having holidays abroad and teeth out. Why should anyone else be expected to worry? Yet indignation and this tearful sense of injustice filled him as he whistled his thank-you and turned, un-extraordinary, away.

He walked along tasting blood. The right side of his mouth was still paralysed; he must surely have spoken lob-sided, with his lips blocked stiff? His tongue was working all the time, it seemed to be quite out of control, a creature working on its own, licking and jabbing and darting back startled, peering and sniffing and retreating, a puppy's nose at a hedgehog. Would it be possible to live with such a contraption? It felt far too big. And suddenly in his mind's eye he remembered how, when he had had a tooth extracted before, the mirror had shown his gums naturally pink and then, where the tooth had been, a deep dark hole as red as a dark plush curtain. As rich as the taste of blood itself—yet how oddly alien, how excessively rich was this taste of his own uncooked blood.

He walked on, wanting to get his tongue past the denture into those dark deep holes, his own holes: but the new thing kept him out. It was worse than wanting to squeeze a forbidden spot. And meantime the buses passed, the coats and hats hurried along, the great hum of the traffic's acceleration echoed the London air and electric lights began to flick at the eye, making it dusk, a winter's dusk. Suppose, he suddenly thought, they were somebody's else's teeth? Then for once he thanked heaven for the plastic industries.

THUS preoccupied, and having turned up and down several streets, Pemberton felt abruptly tired—perhaps the shock of the wound was telling on his nerves?—and decided to sit down with a cup of tea. He looked round for a tea-shop. A little further on a bright-neoned window announced coffee. Yet it seemed to be a flower-shop, the window was tropical with big-leaved plants. Through his preoccupation he saw with precise distaste that they could not spell "coffee" correctly. "Caffee," it said. Well, perhaps they could at least make the stuff? A cup of coffee, in the circumstances, would certainly be more stimulating than tea. He walked along and went inside.

But it seemed to be a restaurant, it was so profusely decorated and expensively half-lit. He hesitated, his mind still on his teeth, and now further confused by this sudden mistake. But he felt too tired—and perhaps they would allow him to sit with a sandwich? He would certainly have to sit down. He took off his coat, looked for a peg, and finally hung it on a set of antlers, which seemed to be the rule here. He sat down at a small table whose cloth seemed to be a kind of tartan—or was it graph-paper?—covered with ink-bursts. Not very clean, he thought; but so much the better for his purse. Then his eye, always a little short-sighted and in his confusion the more so, saw that behind a bar, whose central eminence was an immense machine of silver—it conveyed to him the luxury of wine-buckets and duck-presses—there stood a tall blue-eyed

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Chinese in a white jacket. He thought a second time about his purse: for some reason only expensive restaurants employed coloured servants. But in any case he was too tired to move. Soho, he thought hopefully, might have extended since *his* days.

Pemberton was not more than forty-five years old: but his experience of the contemporary world was of a much older man. He had "retired" young. He lived alone in a small stucco villa at Kew, a house quiet and dim as its ivy and the dust on its old silk blinds. He never visited London proper, and practically his only excursions were into the Gardens an avenue away. When he did go to London it was by cab to a club or to an old friend's house; sometimes he took the old metropolitan train to Hampstead to visit an aunt and relatives local to her. He was in no acute sense a recluse, but his only real contact with the outside world was by the eye rather than by the explanatory ear: and about what he saw he was incurious. He was too deeply involved in his own occupation. He was a botanist, and one who preferred to the field his own greenhouses, a theorist who wrote learnedly on his subject and lived quietly secluded, cultivating from a distance other people's gardens. He took a newspaper, but scarcely read it. Like many other men his preferences were for the older fashions of his childhood's home, which itself had maintained the traditions of earlier generations, but unlike most men he was able to practise this preference. Fortune, or a magical selection in such matters had granted him a cook-housekeeper, nearly seventy years old and as conservative as himself. Among solid Victorian furniture that smelled of blankets and fruit, they had the electricity—there was no fabricated nonsense about keeping the gas—and there was even running water in one bedroom, though not his. The bath had huge brass taps, big-eared as sitting hares, and his housekeeper still wore a cap.

Although a man of small passion, Pemberton had developed one particularly strong dislike: he loathed objects made from modern plastic materials. Naturally some of these had been imported into the house. He noticed that the brown brittle electric light sockets soon split, he had broken his fingernails trying to open a plastic-sealed medicine carton, somebody had once sent him a set of occasional cups and saucers whose very touch and unusual lightness had inspired him with horror. And now, he reflected as he sat in this strange restaurant, he had a plastic device in his mouth for life. . . . Better than somebody else's teeth anyway. And hadn't teeth always been plastic? Would he have fussed as much about an old-fashioned vulcanite telephone? He tried to think fairly on the subject.

A WOMAN was standing above him, a lady in a smart coloured dress. Her black hair shone with pomade, mascaraed eyes lowered at him a long glance of sulky question. She looked like a foreigner and a moment later he was sure, for she was asking him something in a foreign language: "Espresso?" she said. And as he made no answer: "Cappucino, then?"

He rose awkwardly, pushing the little table aside. It collided with the next little table, whose coffee jumped in quick single spouts from the cups to soak, with elastic attraction, cakes set nearby. "Oh, I *am* so sorry," he whistled to his neighbour, who, he was startled to note, seemed to have bright blue hair, an impossibility but difficult to confirm now—he would apologise in a moment, for obviously this foreign lady needed something first, and from her expression urgently. Perhaps he was sitting at her table?

"Is-this-your-table-madam?" he asked, enunciating each word with an especially clear whistle for the foreign ear.

The lady suddenly smiled, her long red lips making a shape downdrawn as the silent howl of a tragic mask: "Of course it's mine. I wouldn't be here else, would I?" Then her lips closed on a thin breath of impatience. But at least the lady did speak English.

He smiled. "Then do please sit down."

"Sit down? *Me?*"

"Yes. I'm sure there's plenty of room. . . ."

He was going to say "for me elsewhere" when the lady's face showed an abrupt change, this time expressing with a creased forehead

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and a painful widening of mouth and cheeks the stretched pain-belly laugh of a classic comedy mask. Yet from this joviality there issued an opposite voice of disgust:

"Fresh, eh? I know your sort. All you'll get is a cup of fresh coffee from *me*. Now do you want one or not?"

Pemberton hardly knew what to say. Her attitude seemed to be one both of rebuke and invitation. It would be best, perhaps, to accept.

"Thank you," he stammered, "thank you indeed."

"Then if you'll sit down quiet I'll bring it you."

She turned with a whirled refusal of skirts and hurried away. Only then did it occur to him that—yes, for there were similar ladies moving about with trays—she might be a waitress.

"Now what about these cakes?" a big brown voice boomed in his ear. He turned to face the lady whose hair burned blue as a police lamp.

The face beneath was old with reproach. It was grey, and the greyer for an incast beam of mauve neon that mortified her, through the croton-leaves, from the window outside. Now the reproach turned to sharp distaste as, with that common but always unbelievable motion of aggression, eyes and the whole head unashamedly travelling their slow frown, she looked him up and down.

"I'm so sorry," he whistled. "Intolerably awkward of me. We'll have them replaced and you must allow me to pay."

"I should think so indeed!" the woman said, nodding and sniffing at the same time. But still she looked at him with a kind of nausea drawing back her lip. What could he have done to deserve this? At that moment the anæsthetic began to loose its hold on his jaw, he felt the first thrust of a raw dull pain, and his lower lip fell so that suddenly he realised he was facing her with what might have been a similar expression of nausea. He might have been copying her, making faces. He turned hastily away. The matter, in any case, seemed to be closed.

He remembered that he had left the analgesic tablets in his overcoat pocket. He managed to rise without knocking the little ham-shaped table off its thin metal legs—and was feeling for the tablets in his overcoat pocket when suddenly that smart, sultry waitress was by his side. She wore again the comedy mask, the dangerous one:

"Your coffee's on the table," she said accusingly. "Not by any chance leaving us, are you?"

"What? Of course not, no."

"I thought not," she said, looking at the overcoat as if it was already making its own way to the door. And then she waited, ostentatiously whistling and swivelling her heel, until he had found what he wanted, and returned to his table.

HE noticed that the woman with the blue hair was bent in conspiracy with the two people who were sitting next to her—for they all sat at these small tables squashed together—a young woman whose hair sprouted from the back like a fountain of muddy water or perhaps a horse's tail, together with a young man whose white and pimpled jaw was outlined with a shaved charcoal-line of beard. They appeared to be whispering about him; for all three stopped and shot upright and separate like righted skittles as he approached. He disregarded them, though he was getting a little angry—after all, he had done all he could. He had apologised? He had offered to pay? And perhaps this irritation alerted him for a moment or two. He sat down and for the first time looked carefully around him.

His eye had already observed the plants lining the window—warm-weather stuff, crotons and castors and rubbers. But now he saw that this noiseless flora had a silent faunal accompaniment—in a cage just past the end of the row of plants, there sat, morose, with inward-searching eyes, three large birds with brilliant blue knobs on their heads. With their long beaks downpressed and their necks hunched in high feathered collars they looked like a row of little old cold men ruminating upwards on such terrible tumours pressed upon them by an ironical Fate: they did nothing to amuse the company for whose benefit they must have been present, they sat silent and

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motionless: they might have been stuffed but for one small movement—every few minutes over one or other of six hate-filled eyes there crept a lizard-like web of thin putty-coloured skin that stayed then lowered for a long neuralgic moment, an eclipse like the tender tiredness of all time, before suddenly snapping back to reveal the old malevolence altogether refreshed.

Behind these birds stretched a wall of Stuart tartan dotted with bamboo baskets trailing philodendra; northern antlers conflicted with a tropic plantain wide as a green eagle's wing; on a southern adobe stretch of rough plaster a claymore cut its hardy line, and a giant thistle of illuminated amber cast curious shadows on a dead Venetian blind; stools made of elkhorn crowded against the bamboo bar, a full-size reproduction of *The Stag at Bay* was framed with raffia. The Chinese behind the bar wore a turquoise kilt, which was an extravagance, for his legs were rarely seen. Through the smoke of cigarettes, the subtropical plants, the steam rising from coffee, and the steam on the window there could be seen, it seemed an æon away, the red tops of passing, grinding buses.

Pemberton sat there bewildered. He had never seen anything like this. It occurred to him that once he had read of the Scottish baronial castles of Chile, where Spanish speaking families lived among the antlers and Victoriana of their bridge-building ancestors. But what a queer motif to select! . . . Pemberton expected a restaurant to be conservative in English tradition—cream and oak, or mildly rococo. There had been Romano's and so on—but surely this was going a bit far? He shook his head at such brittle extravagance, noticed that a southern-eyed man serving next to the Chinaman wore a shirt busy with coloured drawings of the Eiffel Tower, and returned, much shaken, to his own more intimate problems.

He faced the coffee, served in a transparent plastic cup. He lifted this with distaste—but the coffee was certainly good. Yet such a sudden hot liquid brought a new twinge of pain to his aching jaw. The dentist had smiled: "What people hate most about having teeth out is losing part of themselves. They're maternal about their ivory." Despite the intended cathartic of this confidence, Pemberton did feel, perturbably, that he had lost part of himself. Never again, said his aching jaw; never, never, never. It was simply another step on the hopeless downward voyage of decay. And most deeply of all, this loss conflicted with the middle-aged illusion that somehow, somewhere, youth will be found again.

From behind a group of gamboge gourds a rich and reedy tropical music played, a canned clanking of *burro* skulls and a shaking of seeds to hiss exotic rhythms, an echoing ghost of the human chatter all around; smoke rose, spoons tinkled—but most sounds were softened in so much foliage and tartan; one of the birds abruptly gave a long rising shriek, then as abruptly left off—it had been simply not worth while; and meanwhile Pemberton was thinking: "Will I be like one of those men, who, reading, are seen slowly to project their denture on tongue-tip *right out over the lower lip*, pause, then silently withdraw the thing?"—and quickly shook his head free of such thoughts. He must wake himself up. No use sitting there regretting the contraption like an old dog with a tin can tied to his tail. It was there, locked up in him, and that was that. If he had to rely on a foreign body inside him—well, he would: after all, we wear boots, braces, corsets. . . . He decided to improve the moment, took out his notebook and glanced over the crotons behind. Something might occur to him.

FROM the dark beneath the table a furry little head shot up warm against his knee. Still looking at the crotons, he said: "Pretty puss, puss, puss," as his hand went down to stroke it.

"I beg your pardon?" said the woman with blue hair, whose face lay just to the right of the croton at which he was peering.

Confused, he said: "Nice pussy, I said."

"And *who* are you calling nice pussy, may I ask?"

He smiled and shook his head. His awful smile spread across his face, his eye popped and a mouth of terror formed itself: one

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would have thought he had been stabbed suddenly in the back.

Thus the two regarded each other with what seemed again a mimicked disgust. "Naturally," he said, "I was referring to this little pussy-cat here."

He looked down and saw the sharp eyes of a poodle staring up at him.

"Well, *really* !" the woman said. "And do you usually refer to dogs as puss—you ask *me* to believe that?" A man was now sitting opposite her. She addressed him: "First the waitress, and now *me*. It's disgusting. This man should be turned right out."

He was a large man, with a sand-coloured beard on a tough putty skin. In spite of the warmth—though perhaps because he had only just arrived—he was still wearing over his head the hood of his duffle-coat, and now Pemberton found staring at him with cold sloe eyes what appeared to be an enormous khaki Santa Claus, beard and duffle and eyes were all one muddy monotone.

In the pause that followed, and during which the duffle-coat seemed to swell with breath for battle, Pemberton looked anxiously from this new Santa Claus to the poodle. The poodle gazed back, pert with sophistication from beneath its fringe. "I love you," the eyes said.

Pemberton's brain was hammering back: ". . . and I hate your itsy-bitsy guts"—when he suddenly saw, in the way a relevant truth like a new learned word reveals itself in multiple, that there were several other poodles in the restaurant, many ladies had poodles to knee or leashed, and only poodles. No other dogs. Could there be some poodle-show about?

In the same paralysed second he saw too what the florescence of the kilted Chinese and his Eiffel-towered colleague had so far obscured —now that his neighbours were largely turned round and looking at him, he saw that beside this blue-haired woman and her khaki Santa Claus there surrounded him a really most extraordinary lot indeed. A drawn young woman with straight silver hair slack to either side like the wig of a hanging judge short of the crimpers; another girl who looked like a monstrous two-legged fly in thin long black trousers—this one's hair was again dressed like a horse's tail. And how many of these there seemed to be! But the air pranced with a wagging of tails! While the men seemed to have had their heads nearly shaved, other girls had their hair short and ragged as a gutter-snipe's, and their big painted eyes looked starved and ghostly. Could these be Londoners? In the soft pink light, with that odd music and patches of darkness and the hum of talk, he thought: "If I tried to describe them nobody'd believe me" and passed his hand over his eyes, then looked again and saw they were real, they were still there . . . and now they were all staring at him as the big duffle-coat expended its toad's breath in a raised voice, deep and adenoidal:

"What was that you said to this lady?"

Once more Pemberton smiled, but now broadly, and his look of horror grew intense. He began emphatically to end all this: "A silly mist——" he began. But two such emphatic sibilants blasted out a really loud whistle, unfortunately it nearly corresponded to the two notes of an American street-call.

"Oh!" screamed the blue-haired woman.

"Well, *well*!" said the big man, rising.

"Trying to take the mike out of us, are you?" said the big man now huge at his full height. Pemberton said sharply: "Taking the what? I'm afraid I don't. . . ."

"You don't understand plain English, eh? Well, I can rumble your type all right."

"Rumble? This is all Greek to me." Pemberton felt suddenly that the only thing was to laugh away such an absurd misunderstanding, to be jocular: "And I haven't my Liddell and Scott handy——"

He laughed. But nobody else did.

"Being funny?" the big man said, leaning forward.

Voices were saying behind: "Tried to get off with the waitress. And now molesting this lady!" . . . "Drunk" . . . "More likely the Wapping thug" . . . "That poor little girl!" . . . "They say he's the Wapping man" . . . "Nonsense" . . . .

"I said being funny?" the man repeated.

Pemberton was getting to his feet, edging up difficultly between the rocking little table and his chair. Only a self-possessed man would

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have remained sitting. In his confusion Pemberton felt he must stand if the other man was standing. But at the same time he was cursing himself for bringing the lexicon into this—of course, they would never have understood. His mind snatched for another reference book. The first thing that came he said:

"Well, let's say my Baedeker."

That was silly too, he thought.

But all around the word seemed to have taken effect. The air gasped surprise.

"*What* did you say?" the woman screamed.

Somebody a table off said out loud: "Something about bed, he said" . . . "Said he wants to go to bed with her. . . ."

IT WAS no good, anything he did or said was turned upside down. It was absurd, absurd—but there it was, actually happening, a mad little misunderstanding ballooning out of all proportion, to *him* and whom he was and where he was. To where he was—he was in London all right, but the place, these people? . . . They looked suddenly like a circle of the soft strange mad in fancy dress, staring at him, cooing their eyes at him . . . it began to look unreal as a real madhouse . . . and he was abruptly conscious of hate massing at him, of all eyes closing in a circle round him, of the feeling of a solitary boy ringed with bullies preening for strength and loving what they are going to do . . . led by Santa Claus, whose eyes were hard and loving, a humourless man measuring him, a man who liked to order things, a cold straightener-up, the kind who would love to take your car to pieces or jump at the chance of directing traffic, who loved his little power seriously . . . and whose duffle-coat arm suddenly shot out and grasped his coat collar. "Come on, I've had enough."

"Steady on!" Pemberton gasped, pulling back. "Take your hands. . . ."

"You're going out that door."

"I most certainly am *not*."

The man tugged. It jolted Pemberton's wounded mouth, and he suddenly cried: "I've had my teeth out!"

It was a cry from the heart, a pathetic cry of last distress—and just then the man pulled too hard, the table went over, Pemberton came suddenly stumbling through, his hand shot out to save himself, it caught the man on his cheek, the man thought Pemberton had struck at him, perhaps his mind was still ringing with the word "teeth" for he drew his fist back and hit Pemberton sharply in the mouth. It was not a heavy, premeditated blow. It was a tap in the muddle of a moment. But it broke Pemberton's new teeth.

Pemberton staggered back, tasting blood again, his mouth open and red. The man stood for a moment very still. Then, with shocking agility for a large man in such a large coat, he disappeared—he slid through the waitresses and was out of the glass door before Pemberton, through broken teeth, could speak. Righteous one moment, confused perhaps by the table crashing, the man must have suddenly thought "assault" and "police station" and "court" and all the trouble that would have meant. So he cut away.

Now an Italian in a tartan waistcoat, the manager, had come up and his arm was round Pemberton soothing him, hurrying him towards the kitchen. Pemberton was pointing back at the woman with blue hair and trying to explain. "I want her name, she knows his name," he kept repeating, but the manager soothed him with "yes" and "in a minute" while over Pemberton's shoulder he gestured at the woman to leave. There would be no scandal at La Tartana.

So that when a few minutes later Pemberton had washed his mouth and, with his broken denture wrapped in a handkerchief, had returned, the woman was gone. Nobody knew her name. Nobody knew anything. Pemberton tried over and over again to get some explanation, a witnessing of what five minutes before had been so evident.

But nobody wanted to be part of this.

The gramophone was turned up, and everybody chatted more urgently over their coffee.

Powerless, raging now with injustice, he snatched at his coat and went for the door to look for a policeman.

But outside his eye caught sight of a clock. Illuminated, it said quarter-past five.

He hailed a cab. There would be just time, he thought, to pay a visit to the dentist.

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Music

Four New English Operas

THIS season, for the first time since Benjamin Britten began writing his brilliant series of works for the stage, several other English composers of considerable talent have joined him in this field, and shown that opera is a form in which they have essential things to say. Since Britten holds such a long lead and has developed such a refinement of operatic technique, it is perhaps only natural that Lennox Berkeley and William Walton should follow him in certain respects. Michael Tippett's *Midsummer Marriage*, however, shows not a single trace of Britten's influence; in this as in other ways it stands quite apart.

The four composers seem to have had very different motives in choosing the subjects that they did: Berkeley had always been "attracted to Nelson"; Britten, one may assume, perceived in *The Turn of the Screw* a challenge to his virtuosity in evoking any atmosphere, however intangible; Walton was intent on writing a singer's opera with a great love story, and after much searching found *Troilus and Cressida*; while Tippett wanted to offer us a *Magic Flute* of 1955. To the immediate experience of hearing these operas could be added the incidental pleasures of reading Chaucer, Henry James, perhaps Mahan's great *Life of Nelson*, and, for the *Midsummer Marriage*, as much as one cared to manage of Jung, Yeats, *The Family Reunion*, *The Revolt of the Angels*, the Romance of the Holy Grail, and Wagner's prose writings—to name only a few of the commentaries either mentioned by the composer himself or self-evident from the character of the work.

Most of our present-day music critics have developed the habit, in writing about a new opera, of forgetting the music almost completely and concentrating their attention upon the libretto. That this is a one-sided approach to the problem is obvious by definition. And if we are to concern ourselves with one side rather than the other, then it should be with the music rather than the text. Nevertheless, it is important to remind ourselves that both the dramatic construction and the actual use of words in an operatic libretto must be considered according to very different principles from those we should apply to the ordinary theatre. Some of the most penetrating theories ever stated on this subject may be found in the writings of the French encyclopædists. They insisted (1) that the dramatic construction must not be too subtle or too precise, or contain finely developed discussions or intrigues; (2) that "music can express only the most stirring emotional phases of drama, and therefore the action must proceed at a feverish pitch"; (3) that the words of a good libretto will always need "exaltation into music"; and (4) that the diction must be quite different from that of the ordinary theatre, far less varied, using a far smaller vocabulary, and remembering always (again) that "the moments of passion belong entirely to the composer." These principles are very similar to those stated by W. H. Auden a few years ago in connection with *The Rake's Progress*; and Verdi certainly followed them closely. That the librettist must refrain from trying to write a literary masterpiece does not of course mean that he will be excused for insulting us (or the composer) with verses of the kind that one might improvise in a charade; if we want to find an example of words that are clear and dignified and yet still leave it to the composer to "exalt them into music," we can hardly do better than examine certain

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passages in the much maligned libretto of *The Magic Flute*.

OF THE four composers, Lennox Berkeley probably set himself the most unmanageable task. But it also seems to me that he and his librettist aggravated the matter by the way in which they treated their chosen subject. To portray Nelson as a tenor with rather a sneaking fondness for Massenet, is already asking a good deal; but to portray him without letting us catch sight of the sea until the third act, is almost as though one wrote an opera on Kepler that dealt only with his mother's 'witchcraft' and the troubles this caused him. His contemporaries said of Nelson that he was "little in little things, but the greatest man in great things" they had ever known; and of his greatness the opera gives us almost no dramatic evidence until the scene of his death on the *Victory*. Nor are we shown much trace of the greatness of heart that made him call back the mailboat, shortly before the battle of Trafalgar, because one of his crew had been so busy receiving and getting off the mailbags that he had forgotten to drop in his own letter to his wife. I do not mean that an opera based on the life of a famous historical character must automatically be at fault whenever it diverges from the facts, or falls short of them. But neither must it expect the audience to supply in imagination a glory of which there is no authentic sign on the stage.

Berkeley's opera has indeed many failings. The text defies the second and fourth principles of the encyclopædists, through its inclination to be both garrulous and highflown; the first act is ramshackle in its construction; the final scene for Lady Hamilton is a terrible comedown after the death of Nelson; while in the first scene of the second act Berkeley has given us a succession of excellent ensembles, whose musical and dramatic progression, however, is achieved at the cost of making two of the principal characters stand around for twenty-nine pages of the vocal score and then suddenly exclaim "What is this madness?"—as though the parting of Lord and Lady Nelson had not concerned them till that very moment.

Yet there is one episode that does triumphantly succeed; and I believe it succeeds quite independently of our inevitable reactions to the great event with which it is concerned. When Nelson was wounded at Trafalgar, he covered his face and his decorations with a handkerchief, so that he could be carried below deck without the ship's company knowing that he had been hit; in Berkeley's opera we are in the cockpit of the *Victory* and a wounded man has just returned to the fight, when a chorus is heard chanting "Make way there. Make way there." This chant has the sickening impact that Nelson himself instinctively tried to avoid; yet if the shock had been delayed until he actually appeared in the cockpit, the music could only have given us a sudden stab. As it is, Berkeley has been able to construct a musical sequence that embodies this crowning moment of English history without smallness or exaggeration. Let me describe very shortly what he does. A sailor has come down, only slightly wounded, his eyes ablaze with the thought of Nelson himself "in the very thick of the fight." He goes back, and as he leaves the cockpit a steady thrumming begins in the bass, a pedal on the note B. The three sailors in the cockpit recommence their singing; the music swings along in the same 6/8 measure as before, but the outlines are different: more grim, more stubborn—only a shade, but we recognise it. The pedal runs on and on; then the chant is heard, faintly at first and in unison. The three sailors cease singing; the chant spreads to a chorus of four parts and moves nearer. By now the moment of Nelson's entry can be as quiet as the grave. He sings only a few phrases. The sailors have a kind of spiritual: "Who's to bring the heavy news home?" Nelson dies; and the scene finishes with an ensemble above a three-note ostinato. The fact that Berkeley has saved the three principal features of his dramatic construction for this scene alone—the long pedal point, the spiritual, the ostinato—makes the impression all the more powerful.

JUST as Berkeley's opera inevitably invites comparison with the Nelson of history, so Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* makes us wonder how he came to choose a story whose particular subtleties are beyond the power of music to express. I believe the answer is the one I gave before, though it needs elaborating. Most operatic composers would insist on having at their disposal the variety afforded by many voices ranging from soprano to bass. Britten, on the other hand, will risk using men's voices only: glory in it, in fact (as in *Billy Budd*); or else going to the opposite extreme as in the

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present instance—he will confine himself to four sopranos, a tenor, and a treble. If he can add to this self-imposed handicap the further task of having to discover a new range of orchestral sounds, and to achieve this with a handful of instruments, then he is at his happiest. Let us be clear: these problems are not the same as those that Stravinsky sets himself, for there the self-imposed restraints affect the composition at every level, whilst with Britten it is above all the surface of the music that is involved, the sheer sensuous impact of the sounds. In *The Turn of the Screw* it seems that there is nothing within his conception of the subject that he cannot evoke with the help of the few instruments at his command. How instructive it is, for example, to compare his skill in merging one texture and atmosphere into another, with Berkeley's perhaps too favourite technique of engineering a slow musical fade-out and then beginning again. Yet it would be quite wrong to pretend that a masterly evocation of atmosphere is the only thing that Britten achieves. Especially beautiful is his music for the children, and for the governess as she writes, and then reads over, her letter to their guardian; while the piano scene is brilliant, though the ending takes us perilously near to Hollywood (when Miles "plays triumphantly" as the governess and Mrs. Grose rush out to find Flora). That there are moments of indifferent quality must also be admitted. One example is the duet for the two ghosts at the beginning of the second act, which wears thin after many hearings—not because it makes nonsense of Henry James, but because the composer's invention has fallen below its usual standard.

I mention these examples of good and less good, because there is now a whole team of investigators in this country (as in many others, I am sure) who seem to take it for granted that any work containing a large number of thematic relationships must be of the finest quality. No criticism could be more unsafe than this; for it cannot give us the slightest idea as to whether the manifold cross-references in the work are the result of imagination or of accountancy. It is of course interesting that the various scenes of *The Turn of the Screw* are linked together by a series of orchestral variations on a single theme; and that there are also other connections running through the opera. But it is only an authentic experience of the music that can entitle us to say, as it is almost bound to do, that this is indeed Britten's best work for many years.

THOUGH I did not find the harmonies of *The Turn of the Screw* so tough and invigorating as they had been described to me, they were certainly far more daring than those of *Troilus and Cressida*. Here we were faced with a work which showed no interest whatever in saying new things in a new way, but yet managed to divide critical opinion almost to the same extent as the more problematical *Midsummer Marriage*. Elderly musicians accounted for any dislike of Walton's opera by asserting that it came from a mere youthful demand for adventure. Young musicians answered that their elders were confusing the issue: the question was not whether the opera was 'conservative' or 'revolutionary,' but whether its music had a note-by-note integrity; in other words, whether its conservatism was vital.

One most impressive aspect of the score was the free and majestic articulation of its main outlines; for Walton never diminishes the size of his great subject by tightness or complexity of treatment. But although it may be possible to reconstruct the stride and space of old-fashioned romantic opera, the actual language is another matter; for this was essential at its proper period, but is only pretence (or nostalgia) to us; and though this pretence may be carried through with all the skill of a Van Meegeren impersonating Vermeer, musicians are not likely to be taken in for long.

When I go over to the piano and play through some of the music again, these remarks seem too downright by half. There are moments of true intensity, whether or not they drag us back to Edwardian times; there are harmonies that sound fresh although stale, and melodies that I resist quite instinctively but which are beautiful all the same. Yet I believe that certain criticisms may justly be made. In the first place, the melodies often seem to be patched together, or else—as in Cressida's second aria—they begin beautifully but then the composer's impulse falters and skill and conscience take over. Secondly, though the orchestral writing is masterly, here again there are signs that make one uneasy; and none more so than the expedient Walton uses so

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very often, of constructing the short orchestral interludes between one vocal entry and another by taking over the last few notes of the singer and then either repeating them through several octaves (nearly always downwards), or continuing downwards from the actual pitch of the voice, or just echoing the singer's last phrase. One expects this technique here and there, naturally; but surely not fifty times, as in Walton's opera?

The libretto seems a strange mixture of good and bad. The dramatic plan is elaborated with great skill; the first two requirements of the encyclopædists are satisfied, the chorus is used sparingly, the one ensemble for all the principle characters—as Ernest Newman remarked with his unerring insight into such things—occurs late enough in the opera for us to know what each of them is thinking and feeling. Against this, it must be said that the actual language Christopher Hassall uses is sometimes quite lacking in distinction. However true it may be that in opera "the moments of passion belong entirely to the composer," the words can still be clear and direct and (for such a subject as *Troilus and Cressida*) noble; and I believe the composer must have been hampered more than once by the unconvincing language he had to set. Nevertheless, he has given us at least one brilliant portrayal of character, that of Pandarus; and whatever we may decide about the imaginative quality of the music, he has set us an example of spaciousness and competence and of sheer masculine vigour that is very welcome in English opera just now. And for this we can thank him.

So we reach the last and most striking of the four works. Michael Tippett ran many risks. He wrote innumerable articles about *The Midsummer Marriage* long before it appeared, and so invited the critics to say that he had taken himself too seriously. He juggled with myth and magic and custom and so let himself (and us) in for solemn treatises on folklore. He mingled realism and symbolism on the stage and had to add footnotes to the score in order to explain what was going on. In short, he wrote his own libretto. The moment came when one decided that no valuable progress would be made either by defending it or by attacking it, and that the only sensible thing was to concentrate on the music. To compare *The Midsummer Marriage* with its ancestor, *The Magic Flute*, was only to realise once again Mozart's profound dramatic insight and his genius in subordinating all his characters to an ideal without subtracting an inch from their stature as human beings. But as soon as one took the *music* of *The Midsummer Marriage* as a point of departure, the opera could work its magic without hindrance. Not that Tippett has written a flawless masterpiece in a musical sense, either; but when he succeeds (as he often does) in finding the exact image that he wants, we cannot help being aware of an imaginative source that runs purer and deeper than in any of the other three operas.

He excels above all in lyrical passages, especially those for the lowlier pair of lovers, Jack and Bella; in springy and delicate rhythms such as those of the *Alla Marcia* early in the first act; and in a peculiar radiance of expression that we find, for example, in the music for Jenifer when she returns to the world of reality later on in the same act.

To expect Tippett to maintain this level everywhere would be madness. Yet the opera as a whole shows that he is one of the few musicians of his generation whose development has not come to a halt. The orchestral writing is still heavy-handed, even coarse, at times, but has improved tremendously; and the music has a grander sweep than he has ever attempted before. Sometimes his technical ability seems to let him down; we have to read his intentions rather than the notes that he has actually committed to paper. One could only wish that the influence of Hindemith, which shows as strongly as Wagner's in this opera, had helped him to achieve more often a convincing harmonic structure.

Yet whatever failings of craftsmanship we may notice, there is in the music of *The Midsummer Marriage* a degree of passion and of integrity that makes even the most penetrating attacks on its theatrical shortcomings really irrelevant. As a work for the theatre, *Troilus and Cressida* excels all the others; as an exhibition of wonderful artistry none of them will compare with *The Turn of the Screw*. But I believe that *The Midsummer Marriage* gives us most hope for the future, and that its finest suggestions will not be lost on those who carry forward the now lively tradition of modern English opera.

William Glock

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Letter from PARIS

The "Big Barrel"

ON JANUARY 20th the distillers of Normandy, Maine, and Artois solemnly declaimed at their meeting at Louviers, "We shall survive Mendès-France!" Their prophecy was too easy to gain them credit—they will probably survive the deluge itself; and in any case Mendès-France was obviously not going to last much longer.

But just as the distillers made their vow, Pierre Mendès-France, in a vain effort to remain in office, had already survived the major part—or at least the most spectacular part—of his plans to combat alcoholism. On the evening of December 31st, a few minutes before declaring the Assembly closed for 1954, the President stood up before the empty benches and the sleepy ushers, and read eight decrees which had been signed that day by Pierre Mendès-France and three of his Ministers. The first ran as follows:

> The President of the Council of Ministers,
> After the report of the Minister of Finance, Economic Affairs and Planning,
> The aforesaid Council of Ministers,
> Decrees:
> Sole article: the draft bill . . . relative to the prohibition of the consumption of certain beverages in public drinking places at certain hours of the day is withdrawn. . . .

And the seven following decrees, composed just as dryly, withdrew seven other draft bills of the same anti-alcoholic nature: control of the manufacture and sale of distilling apparatus; control of the number of distillers; police supervision of drinking places; control of the opening of new drinking places; limited advertising for *apéritifs* and spirits; limitation of the percentage of alcohol in certain drinks. . . .

There was no one to listen; most of the deputies had left for their New Year celebrations, and only one or two newspapers noted, in some obscure corner, the details of this retreat. In Parliamentary slang it is called "throwing out ballast," and when a government begins to throw out ballast, its fall is never very far off. And so the anti-alcoholism campaign was buried—the campaign which had been heralded all over the world as the beginning of a new France.

It must be said that the anti-alcohol bills made Pierre Mendès-France more popular across the Atlantic and across the Channel than in his own country, where women's leagues are hardly known and certainly carry no weight. The glass of pasteurised milk was a publicity factor for "Mr. France" in his American tour; this "superman" with his healthy tastes reminded the Americans of their sailor, Popeye, with his tin of spinach; and a few of his other attributes—the "presidential style," the personal "brains trust," the name in initials —reassured them that at last France had an American-style government, and, therefore, a good government. Alas, if M. Mendès-France had drunk coca-cola, the effect would have been the same.

THE anti-alcohol campaign, however, did succeed in one respect. A touch of romance has been rubbed off France: the legend of the Frenchman who knows how to drink while others, northern people particularly, merely get drunk—just as the Frenchman knows how to eat while others merely feed themselves. Like almost all legends, this one too has its seed of truth,

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and there is a wealth of literature, not all of it financed by the liquor trade, to prove it. But Zola's *Assommoir* also has its seed of truth; and cirrhosis of the liver is the French national ailment and the inevitable subject of conversation at every convivial gathering.

The drunks who lurch through the streets on Saturday night are, it is true, more characteristic of puritanical countries where the vine does not grow, and where the enjoyment of alcohol is an exceptional dissipation to which, for lack of daily indulgence, the drinkers are not equal; they resort to it without good conscience, and often with that purposefulness which puritans carry even into their sinning. But if the slow, steady, systematic poisoning with two, three, or five litres of wine daily (a normal ration in France), in addition to a few *apéritifs* and *digestifs*, has fewer disastrous consequences on behaviour in public, the effects are so much the worse for the public's health. The statistics published in support of the anti-alcohol campaign have demolished the legend of French "moderation" in eating and drinking. The most recent figures show that, since the end of the war, the number of alcoholics admitted to public asylums has increased ninefold and that in 1953 alcohol poisoning, medically established and unambiguous—that is, apart from all the fatal diseases aggravated and accelerated by alcoholism, and as distinct from the fatal accidents directly and indirectly due to excessive indulgence in alcohol—came first (displacing tuberculosis) among the causes of death.

For all that, the *chevaliers du Tastevin* have no need as yet to go into mourning. The cartoons of milk-drinking Frenchmen embody an error to which only non-Latins are liable: in the entire anti-alcohol campaign, wine is not mentioned. Wine is an article of mass consumption, a national shrine, the finest flower of French soil, and no government would dare to lay hands on it. The matchboxes put out by the state tobacco monopoly carry advertisements, paid for by the government, to promote the consumption of wine. It is spirits, aniseed drinks, liqueurs, and other distillates that are the objects of the government's—and the treasury's—wrath.

CERTAIN forms of alcoholism are anachronisms that can be made "unfashionable" and are perhaps already on their deathbed; young people, even in rural areas, spend more time out of doors these days and have other amusements besides the *bistro*—cinema, football, camping. As in so many respects, there are two Frances side by side; it is the older that still has the upper hand, politically and economically.

But alcoholism as a social problem is complicated by another and quite different factor, that of agricultural surpluses. The misunderstanding about this is more serious than the confusion between "wine" and "alcoholic drinks." Alcohol is not only a potable liquid; it is primarily—in fact up to 95 per cent—a morally neutral industrial raw material, and in this context the problem is not one of over- but of under-consumption. Since the First World War the state alcohol monopoly, the *régie*, has become a pivot of French agricultural policy. Unsold surpluses of agricultural produce are turned into alcohol, that is, denatured, and bought by the state at guaranteed prices. And, as always happens when an emergency measure becomes a permanent institution, this device, originally intended only to bridge the gap during a market crisis, has made the alcohol *régie* an indispensable customer of French agriculture. The production of normally unsaleable products has become the financially most reliable branch of French agriculture and has, in consequence, expanded enormously. The population of a dozen *départements* have virtually ceased to grow food for the market, but concentrate on supplying the state alcohol monopoly, which buys up their produce sight unseen—roughly 311,725 tons of pure alcohol every year.

This "regulated market" has become an immense deficit undertaking for the French national economy, and a textbook model of the absurdity of subsidy policies of this kind. The cost to the French treasury is greater than if it were to pay high annuities direct to the farmers, on condition that they never did a day's work again. It would save half the cost of the subsidy on every ton of beet if the government bought the crop at its full price and had it ploughed under, instead of letting it be distilled into alcohol. But an entire "denaturing" industry has grown up on the strength of it, with a vested interest in its survival. The last beet harvest in the northern *départements* brought more than three million tons of pure alcohol to the *régie*; its reserves are above 5·2 million tons,

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and no appropriate use can be found for them. In theory this alcohol is destined for the pharmaceutical and perfume industries, which buy it far below cost price and are thus in their turn subsidised; but no pharmaceutical industry in the world could absorb such quantities. The compulsory mixture of alcohol to petrol costs more than if the alcohol were simply destroyed. It is beets which have for a long time been the chief source of alcohol for the *régie*, but the unsaleable surpluses of fruit and vine find their way into the same vast barrel, and even the potato and sunflower growers have discovered this matchless "guaranteed market."

To ease the colossal deficit (the total of which is regarded as a state secret), the *régie* supplies the alcoholic drinks industry at prices which again represent an indirect subsidy, and the industry finds markets wherever it can, not only in France itself, but also in those part of the French colonial empire where Islam erects no barrier against consumption. For some years, French colonial territories south of the Sahara have been flooded with brandy, and with such devastating consequences that the United Nations trusteeship authorities have been moved to protest.

WHEREVER one looks, French agriculture is suffering from over-production: too much wine, too much milk, too much fruit, too much wheat, too much sugar, too much meat. The slogan that French agriculture must be France's first export industry has been going the rounds for several years now, but the closely-woven system of protective tariffs and guaranteed prices has not only sent French prices soaring high above world market levels; it has also meant that the growers have not had to bother about quality, with the ludicrous result that many high-quality agricultural products—for example dessert fruit—have to be imported into France for hard currency, while over large areas of the country unsaleable home-grown fruit is turned into alcohol. French imports of agricultural produce are twice as high as her exports. In the north and east of France there are model farms which can stand up to any competition, but in over two-thirds of the country a low-grade agriculture is artificially kept alive by direct and indirect public subsidies.

Protectionism is an animal that eats its own tail. As an under-populated country, France does not provide its agriculture, which could easily support a population twice as large, with a large enough market. More than half of the *départements*, drugged by protection, are prostrate; and agriculture, stunted and languishing, has become a burden weighing down the French economy and blocking its access to world markets. The economic expansion in which France is at last sharing along with her European neighbours is a matter for rejoicing, but it has not by any means reached every part of the system; it is more or less confined to a dozen industrial *départements* in the north and east and in the Rhône valley, while in other parts of the country decay and impoverishment continue, and the population drifts away. Even less has it extended to France overseas, whose existence is today more obviously in danger than ever before.

Algeria is an integral part of the motherland, of the French wine-country. It is really a piece of France transplanted to North Africa, and contributes its share to practically every agricultural surplus. The conditions of production are more sensible, and labour costs are only about one-fifth or one-sixth, but it has the same guaranteed markets as French agriculture, and it has no other market than France: the native population is economically as non-existent as it is politically, and as far as wine is concerned, the Algerian Muslims would refuse to drink it even if they could afford to. The result is absurd, but quite characteristic of this colonial economy: in the midst of an underfed population, the French settlers grow a product which nobody wants, and which has the only virtue that it makes Algeria—the colonists' Algeria—entirely dependent on the French willingness to absorb their surpluses. About 1,245,500 tons of Algerian wine flow from Algeria into the big alcohol barrel. In all other respects, French colonisation has been at a standstill for forty years. The amount of land cultivated by the French and other Europeans is slowly declining; small peasant holdings are disappearing; but the larger ones are flourishing, and their prosperity is secured on two conditions—that they do not increase their output, and that France continues to buy up their produce, which it does not need.

In return, Algeria gives the mother country an industrial and commercial monopoly. The principles of a colonial mercantilism are in full operation; the colony supplies raw materials

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only (but mercantilist theory was concerned with useful raw materials for which there was a demand!), and all industry, down to the manufacture of shoe nails and trouser buttons, all shipping, and all trade are reserved to the mother country.

For French farmers on Algerian soil, and for the French industrialists and traders enjoying the monopoly, this state of affairs is ideal, and none of them has any interest in changing the conditions of the *pacte colonial*. The Algeria which is really an integral part of France, the Algeria of a million French settlers, would like everything to stay just as it is. But for indigenous Algeria, with its rapidly growing population, the system has no future. Native agriculture, consisting largely of primitive self-sufficient units using tools of stone-age pattern on the poorer half of the country left to them, or of cattle pasturing on the arid plains, cannot feed the growing population; and so one out of every eight Algerians of working age emigrates to France to look for a job and to send home part of his wages.

The sight of these pitiful creatures, the sub-proletariat of the French industrial towns, where they live in shanties and holes, compels compassion; and the knowledge that each of them sends home to his family on the average 100,000 francs a year—representing at least four to five months' work—compels respect. If in the French press these North African immigrants usually appear in the columns of the crime page, they still do perform a vitally important function, not only in the Algerian, but also in the French economy. They fill in the gaps left in the working population of France by the low birth-rate in the years between the wars, and they fill them on the cheapest terms.

For all that, it is not by accident that Algerian nationalism arose, not on Algerian, but on French soil. These immigrants return to Algeria with the ineradicable conviction that in spite of all declarations, they are not Frenchmen; on this, as on the other side of the Mediterranean, they are aliens in their own country.

French colonial mercantilism is unable to integrate North Africa with the home country; but it is almost unassailably entrenched in its positions. It is on the point of risking Europe's last colonial empire. The more urgent the task of economic integration becomes, the more difficult does it appear; and one day it may suddenly be too late.

Herbert Luthy

Song

The wave breaks all its bottle
And sharp as glass on a wall
Catches the lightning's spittle.
O what then shall befall

This poor imprisoned sailor
Shut in his troubled sea
Now the stars become his jailer
And turn their rusty key?

Michael Baldwin

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Films

A World Unfit for Heroines

To go to the pictures looking for an unhappy ending is like going to a brothel looking for romantic love. It is inappropriate; it is presumptuous. A great work of art can support an unhappy ending because it doesn't matter how it ends: however happy or unhappy the fate of the protagonists, it leaves us feeling happy. But the number of films, good films, serious films, which have the cathartic effect of great art is very small (and some of these have it only because, like *Carmen Jones*, *Julius Cæsar*, or *Enrico IV*, they have borrowed their screenplay or their score from an existing work of art). Consequently, since no sane man, however high his brow, can honestly say that he wants to leave a place of entertainment in a state of misery or vicarious frustration, in general a film is a thing that ought to have a happy ending.

This is why the greater part of the thinking we do in the cinema is concerned either with worrying whether the film is going to end happily or, when it is the kind of film that's bound to end happily, with wondering how it will manage to do so. The tension of tragic drama is established by our absorption in the almost mathematical pattern of irony by which destiny works itself out. The tension of a film is established largely by curiosity. Thus, much of the effect of a movie depends on how long it keeps us in suspense, how unnervingly it teases us, how cruelly it makes us vacillate between hope and despair, how close it comes to denying us our wish while leaving itself time to recover and grant it: in short, on how long it can delay the hero and heroine's finishing burst. And the film can do more than step up our anxiety for those we love. It can keep us doubting whom we love or if we love: it can make us go on wondering, not only whether and how we are going to get the ending we want, but what is the ending we want.

The beauty of the film *Woman's World* lies in the skill with which it plays upon our hopes and expectations. A top executive post has to be filled, and the district managers who are candidates for promotion are invited with their wives to New York for five days to be looked over by the company chairman, played by Clifton Webb. There are three candidates, or rather there are three pairs of candidates, for the suitability of the wives is as important as that of the men themselves. Cornell Wilde and June Allyson are devoted to their three children and each other; they seldom, we gather, go to bed any more, but when they do the population is likely to increase; he is decent, forthright, and progressive-minded; she is energetic, anxious to please and clownishly maladroit; he wants the job but not as much as he wants her to be happy; she would hate him to have the job, because it will disrupt her domestic cosiness, but would like him to have it if it will make him happy. Van Heflin and Arlene Dahl have no children and do not seem to sleep with each other, though not through any lack of desire on his part; he is in love with her, she is bursting with ambition for her husband: he is intelligent, dignified, and tactful; she is a narcissist from Texas; he is quietly confident that he is the man for the job; she longs for him to have it, but is sure that she alone can get it for him. Fred MacMurray and Lauren Bacall love each other and have two children, but are on the point of splitting up; he has come up from the ranks, is deeply ambitious, neglects her for his work, and suffers from ulcers; she is warmhearted,

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sophisticated, and rather clever, except in managing her own life; he is torn between his thirst for success and his hunger for her; she doesn't want him to have the job because it will kill him; all the same, she is ready to pretend to the world that they are still happily married so as not to ruin his chances (or the film).

It looks like an open and shut case. As soon as Cornell Wilde and June Allyson appear on the screen we know it is going to be them, the nice young homey All-American couple from Kansas City. What is more, June Allyson was William Holden's wife in *Executive Suite*, and he got the job there. The conviction is strengthened when we find Wilde reiterating Holden's progressive and democratic attitudes (when asked what are the qualifications of an executive, he answers: "The first responsibility (!) of an executive is to run the business for the benefit of the public."). At the same time, June Allyson does put a lot of strain on our credulity: she simply cannot do or say the right thing, however hard she tries. She will obviously have to do better if he is to get the job; but when, and how? We hope, of course, that she won't, because it will all have gone too much according to plan if she does. Still, this being a Hollywood picture, we *know* that she must. And indeed, a few hours before the moment of choice, she meets the chairman's nice worldly-wise widowed sister-in-law, who takes a liking to her honesty and heart of gold and tells her what will be asked of her when she becomes a big executive's wife. So there it is, we think: she may make mistakes, but the new type of executive can afford to have a new type of executive's wife, who makes up in sincerity what she lacks in *savoir faire*. It is all rather disappointing, but Hollywood will have its way.

Whilst Allyson and Wilde have been moving into the lead just as the photo-finish cameras start rolling, things have been happening to the other two couples. MacMurray has discovered that he can't do without Bacall and promises he will forego his claim if she will stay with him, and she agrees to stay. But when the moment comes for him to back out, he confesses to her that he can't stop now, at which she agrees to stay whether he gets the job or no. Meanwhile, Arlene Dahl has been making a heavy play for Clifton Webb, and politely evading—sex being a commodity rather than a need—her husband's embraces, even as she murmurs "Darling, we're on our own for dinner tonight." Then, as the moment of decision draws near, she gets Clifton Webb on his own and asks him who the lucky man is. He replies that her husband is his favourite. She thanks him with a big, deep kiss, and tells him that this is but the prolegomenon. He then informs her that her husband is not going to have the job, because though he would be admirably suited he suffers from one insurmountable handicap. Still unaware who the handicap is, she flounces out of the room.

Returning to the bedroom, she tells her husband the news, says his diffidence is to blame, and tells him that she has been behind every big deal he has ever made and that he only got his present job because she went to bed with the appropriate executive. He replies that the job had been fixed up before she had met the man and tells her to pack and get out.

The great moment has come. Everyone but Arlene Dahl is seated round the dinner table. The suspense can be cut with a fork. Clifton Webb walks round the table telling each of the men in turn how well he would do the job. Then he informs Van Heflin that he had considered him the ideal man but for one handicap which now seems to have been eliminated. The job is his. Allyson and Wilde show nothing but relief. "Liz, I prayed I wouldn't get it, I honestly prayed," protests MacMurray, the archetype of ulcerated man.

So everything ends happily in this woman's world in which the bachelor chairman gives the job to the candidate who has just shown his woman the door.

NOT everyone's reactions to the divagations of the plot will justify the writer's use of the first person plural to describe his own. All the same, it can be said with confidence that most people will be kept guessing throughout the course of the film and that very few are likely to foresee the outcome. Still more remarkable than the surprise of the ending is its irony. The title of the film, the publicity for the film, the theme song which accompanies the credit titles, and almost the entire development of the story are concerned with blowing up an enormous balloon of a commonplace idea which in the final sequence is suddenly deflated.

In this respect *Woman's World* accomplishes something which its more pretentious predecessor, *Executive Suite*, did not. *Executive*

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Suite ends as everyone expects it to end, with William Holden getting the job. It is true that the plot is not without tension, for we are kept guessing until the end as to which of the voters are going to root for him. Even so, it is something of a let-down that the necessary support has to be found with the help of a *deus ex machina* (though it must be admitted that if any film must have a *deus ex machina* it could certainly not find anyone more suitable than Barbara Stanwyck to enact the divine role).

Because its plot is so much more ingenious and at the same time so much more convincing than that of *Executive Suite*, it seems a pity that the critics as a whole have regarded *Woman's World* (which has a first-rate script, full of wit and accurate characterisation) as "*Executive Suite* in a mink coat, not to be taken seriously." One suspects the existence of a prejudice that films which are in cinemascope are necessarily less serious than films which are not. Certainly *Woman's World* does not attempt to create dramatic conflict on the same level as *Executive Suite*: it lacks the satirical tone, the concern with social problems, above all the sense of a real collision of powerful personalities and of the forces behind them. All the same, *Woman's World* is a sufficiently serious film to have made explicit an important idea which was implicit in *Executive Suite*: that the greatest danger to a man's career is his wife.

Towards the end of *Executive Suite*, June Allyson fails to put through a telephone call which could make all the difference between her husband's success and failure in getting the job. This is only one of several incidents in the film which confirm the interpretation of its attitude to executives' wives and mistresses proposed by David Riesman and Eric Larrabee ("The Executive as Hero," in *Fortune*, January 1955): they "are purposeful and have goals for their husbands or protectors, but none of (them) is able to influence the attainment of those goals or ever, in any significant way, to understand them. Indeed, part of *Executive Suite's* implicit hostility to business lies in the picture it presents of the wives of management who can do nothing but hurt their men, even when they try to help them."

Woman's World is not hostile to business. It glamourises business (which is not to say that it romanticises the business world more than *Executive Suite* does in another sense: see Riesman and Larrabee). But it does not glamourise the businessman's wife. In bringing out into the open one of the secondary themes of *Executive Suite*, it debunks with an enchanting finality a favourite fallacy of the women's magazines—and of the movies. Having played for ninety minutes on our stock responses, on reflexes conditioned by its own conventions, Hollywood suddenly shatters one of its favourite myths, its myth of American womanhood.

David Sylvester

Mirrors

Was it a mirror then across a room,
A crowded room of parties where the smoke
Rose to the ceiling with the talk? The glass
Stared back at me a half-familiar face
Yet something hoped for. When at last you came
It was as if the distant mirror spoke.

That loving ended as all self-love ends
And teaches us that only fairgrounds have
The right to show us halls of mirrors where
In every place we look we see our stare
Taunting our own identities. But love
Perceives without a mirror in the hands.

Elizabeth Jennings

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Communications

Sense and Nonsense

SIR—May I be allowed to make a few comments on Mr. Philip Toynbee's article about "Sense and Nonsense" and on the ensuing correspondence?

I agree with Mr. Toynbee that the contemporary philosophers who command the most attention in this country, and to a lesser extent in the United States, are sufficiently close to one another in their outlook and their methods for it to be reasonable, for such purposes as Mr. Toynbee's, to bring them under a single heading; and also that it does not greatly matter what heading is used. "Logical Positivism" has the merit of being familiar; but professional philosophers, as Mrs. Warnock's letter shows, now tend to apply it only to the special doctrines of the Vienna Circle. "Linguistic Analysis," which Mr. Toynbee accepts as a substitute, too strongly suggests the current Oxford fashion. Perhaps "Logical Analysis" would be the least misleading.

Mr. Toynbee's objections to the logical analysts fall into two separate categories. On the one hand, he rejects certain philosophical views which he attributes to them; and on the other he maintains that they have had an unhappy and restrictive influence upon our "intellectual and moral climate." On this second point I can say very little because I do not have the evidence on which to form a judgement. Neither, I suspect, has Mr. Toynbee. It could emerge only from a complicated and delicate sociological investigation which neither he nor anyone else, to my knowledge, has yet conducted. Mr. Toynbee does mention France as a country where metaphysics and literature both flourish; but even granting that there is a causal connection in this case, the example does not prove his point. In Germany, from which the French took their existentialism, it has produced no literary work of any interest: and conversely the existence of a philosophical climate which was hostile to metaphysics does not seem to have inhibited the English writers of the 17th and 18th centuries or the American writers of the twentieth. In general, these questions of historical influence are extremely difficult to settle; it is a field in which conclusions are drawn much too lightly. Mr. Toynbee is not so silly as those journalists who asserted, some years ago, that logical positivism was propitious to fascism, not merely without any supporting evidence but against what evidence there was. But he too appears in this case to have accepted an empirical hypothesis without bothering overmuch about the empirical facts.

On the philosophical side, Mr. Toynbee's arguments are directed for the most part against the verification principle; especially against the use that is made of it in the first edition of *Language, Truth and Logic*. His strongest point is that the principle has been so watered down in the introduction to the second edition that it no longer serves to eliminate metaphysics; and he then protests that it is still treated as if it did. Now I agree that the principle, as I re-formulated it, wears a milder aspect than before, but I still think that it serves its purpose. It is designed to specify the conditions and limits of fact-stating discourse. If it be allowed that metaphysical discourse, in the sense with which we are concerned, is not fact-stating, it does not matter to the argument whether or not it is reckoned to be meaningful in some other fashion. Of course the word "fact" is ambiguous in its turn. It may be objected that the metaphysician does state facts; not ordinary facts, but facts of his own special brand. But then it is incumbent upon him to explain the nature of these "facts": to show by what criterion their validity is to be determined. Failing this, he has not produced a case for us to answer: we do not know how to take his statements. In one of his less serious moments, Mr. Toynbee draws a parallel between the logical analysts' rejection of metaphysics and his own ignorance of Lithuanian. But it is not just that one fails to understand the metaphysician's statements as one may fail to understand a foreign language. It is that they offend against the conditions of ordinary fact-stating discourse, and that we are not given any other standard by which to judge them. This admits the possibility that metaphysicians are doing something which is in some way important: but all too often, it still seems to me, they intend their statements to be informative, in the way that scientific statements are, while inconsistently putting them beyond scientific control. They wish to take the credit and let the cash go: but this is a field in which one can get no credit without cash.

A good example of this is to be found in Mr. Philip Sherrard's talk of "knowledge which is beyond the reach of reason." Mr. Toynbee does not disavow Mr. Sherrard. I wonder if either of them could cite an instance of this sort of knowledge,

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explaining what it comes to and how its validity is to be decided. Presumably not: for that would put it within the reach of reason. The knowledge claimed is safe from attack because it is unintelligible. But it is merely disingenuous to pretend that what is *ex hypothesi* unintelligible can still be true. This is not to say that one understands everything: but only that no question of truth or falsehood arises until there is a statement to be understood.

I do not wish to quarrel with Mr. Toynbee about the proper use of the word "philosophy." There is a warrant in ordinary usage for making it cover metaphysics, just as there is a warrant for regarding a philosopher as one who bears his misfortunes calmly. My motive in trying to restrict its application to logical analysis of one sort or another was to make sure that it referred to a branch of knowledge. This went with my attack on metaphysics: and clearly the important point is whether metaphysics is cognitive, not whether or not it should be called philosophy. It is not an easy question how far those who are usually regarded as philosophers have been engaged in metaphysics; it can be settled only by an examination of each case. My present view is that much of what appears as metaphysics involves the discussion of important points of logic: even when the conclusions lack factual content the reasoning which leads to them raises interesting problems. This clearly applies to Plato and Aristotle, among those on Mr. Toynbee's strangely assorted list, and also to Zeno and Duns Scotus. On the other hand, while writers like Nietzsche and Heidegger may succeed in expressing an interesting attitude to life, a great deal of their work does seem to me quite simply to be nonsensical.

When it comes to his plea for the emancipation of imaginative writers from the limiting conditions of factual discourse, Mr. Toynbee is fighting shadows. He is defending a position which the logical analysts have never attacked. On the contrary, the distinction between the emotive and the descriptive uses of language was put forward, originally I believe, by I. A. Richards, for the very purpose of giving literature its autonomy. Poetry was not to be judged by the standards which apply to scientific theories, or to narratives of fact: it was to be judged by the æsthetic standards appropriate to itself. This is not to say that a poet may not also have a factual message to deliver. But then he gives up his autonomy. So far as the truth or falsehood of the message is concerned, it is subject to the same conditions as any other statement of fact. It is open to anyone to place himself outside what Mr. Toynbee calls the territory of logic. But if he is trying to argue, or even to make statements which are intended to be literally true, he automatically re-enters it.

It has become a familiar complaint that logical analysis has reduced philosophy to a "nimble verbal dance." Mr. Toynbee himself brings this charge as the result of listening to a broadcast discussion of the problem of free-will. But whatever the merits of this particular discussion, the example chosen could hardly be less happy for his purpose. The problem of free-will is one of those to which the methods of analysis are most obviously applicable: the key to its solution is our discovering exactly what it means to say that one could have acted otherwise. Indeed, Mr. Toynbee's own objection to the symposiasts is not that they used the wrong methods, but that they used them badly. He criticises them, perhaps justly, on the ground that they gave a false analysis of what is meant by blame.

It would be well if those who think that logical analysts are neglecting the real problems of philosophy could make it clear what these problems are and what are the methods appropriate for their solution. Mrs. Grene, whom Mr. Toynbee welcomes as an ally, goes on in a rather silly way about "the bright young men" who talk about philosophy for the BBC, but she does not say what sort of information she expects philosophers to provide. I infer from the tenor of her letter that she is looking for moral and political guidance. But why should she suppose that philosophers should be especially qualified to give it? If she thinks that there is a storehouse of authoritative principles, to which philosophers hold the key, she is demonstrably wrong. What philosophers can achieve for her is the analysis of moral and political statements; but there is nothing in the nature of their subject, let it be as metaphysical as you please, to make them competent to order her life.

At the end of his article Mr. Toynbee says that he looks for theories about "such long-forbidden topics as the purpose of life on earth, the nature of man's spirit, and right and wrong." With regard to the nature of man's spirit it is not clear to me what Mr. Toynbee wants. There are important and difficult analytic questions about the relationship of mind and matter, and important and difficult scientific questions about the origin of life. But how far the "poetic" theories that Mr. Toynbee envisages would throw light on either of these subjects I do not know. As for the question of the purpose of life on earth, so far as it has any meaning at all, it comes down, like the question of right and wrong, to one's choice of values. And this in its turn is a matter of individual responsibility. It is no fault of the logical analysts that Mr. Toynbee, like the rest of us, has to settle it for himself.

A. J. Ayer

University College, London

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The Poetic Imagination Today

SIR—Coming at a low ebb of the English critical intelligence, Mr. Spender's Notes on the Poetic Imagination Today ("Inside the Cage") strike me as a statement of exceptional importance. If I venture to take up a personal question with him, it is only because it may lead us to the heart of the problem to be discussed. He refers to my article on "The Drift of Modern Poetry" in the January number of ENCOUNTER and quotes a piece of rhetoric which, like all rhetoric, is somewhat misleading. The point at issue is the social significance of modern English poetry.

When I say that we have the poetry we deserve, I do not mean that the poetry is the product of a bad society. I was thinking in terms of a parallelism rather than of causation. In fact, I agree with Mr. Spender that the poetry (in so far as it is poetry) is the primary fact. In historical perspective we see that society owes everything to the artist—that the philosophy and science of any age is but a commentary on the originative imagination of the artist. Even religion arises as a commentary on ritualistic and magical activities that are essentially æsthetic. It is in this sense (and I think it was Shelley's sense) that poets are legislators. They are not legislators in the sense that they lay down laws, but because they create a pattern into which ideas may flow—they *endow* (I am thinking of Holderlin's "Was bleibet aber, *stiften* die Dichter" society with thought-provoking icons.

Nevertheless, there are one or two things in Mr. Spender's essay I want to quarrel with, and first his metaphor of the Cage. A better image might have been the Well, because the individual sensibility, although "immured," has depths below which communicate with the unconscious—even with a collective unconscious; and above there is an open sky where the imagination may roam in perfect freedom. Though modern poetry has become a "closed system" in the narrow social or political sense, I believe that it is much freer than ever it was. There is now nothing to prevent the poet mediating between his own psyche and those universals which we may (if we like) call divine, or absolute, or (my preference) archetypal. From this point of view it is quite inadequate to describe modern poems (as Mr. Spender does) as "projected complexes."

"When the poet abandons belief . . ."—there is a tremendous ambiguity in all this discussion of belief, and always has been since Professor I. A. Richards set it off. Mr. Spender seems inclined to concede the necessity of belief, but let him beware! Belief is not an emotional wallowing in the transcendental, or some dim intimation of immortality. To the Christian, belief means the Christian dogmas, original sin, the immaculate conception, the divine incarnation of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and much else equally strict. Now it is quite evident that not all the world's great poetry has been written on the basis of such beliefs. I am not thinking only of pagan poets like Homer and Virgil, who have been roped into the Christian tradition by Simone Weil, Theodor Haecker, and Mr. Eliot; but rather of Indian and Chinese poetry, which belong to quite a distinct tradition, and not one that can be equated with Christian "belief" in any sense of the word. Yeats's belief, as expounded in *A Vision*, is again of a quite distinct kind. And finally let me mention the case of Lucretius, a major poet, who proves that there is nothing *poetically* lacking in a belief in rationalism or stoicism—in a belief in unbelief.

In short, belief in the context of this discussion is an emotional attitude, and that the poet *does* need. But it would be much better to call this *sympathy*, a far less ambiguous word. There is then no need to believe or disbelieve in Hamlet's father's ghost—he can take on as much solid flesh as we like. We don't have to believe in a world inhabited by ghosts, or even in the possibility of such a world. But we may have a lively sympathy with Hamlet who did believe in such a world, and it is that sympathy that puts us *en rapport* with Hamlet and with the poetry he utters.

That is why the quotation Mr. Spender gives from a review by Mr. Cyril Connolly is such nonsense. It does not matter whether critics believe or not, but they must be capable of a sympathetic identity with the poet's creation. We have to learn to use the word "empathy," which is a key-word in all modern æsthetics. Of course, many people are not capable of exercising empathy (thanks to the destructive education they receive), but a naturally sensitive person can identify himself with any image or symbol, any ritual or myth. "Belief" is irrelevant to the process.

Finally, why do we continue to live and create if we have no beliefs? We go on because we have what Santayana called "animal faith." We believe in life, in the "miracle," and all we need is the substance of Mr. Spender's fifth proposition, quoted from Henry Miller. If we live in that miracle we have all that we need—we have solved what Mr. Spender calls the problem of putting the creative imagination back at the centre of life. But I do not see what this has got to do with belief (i.e. doctrines and dogmas, thearchies and theogonies). The modern world, until total war and scientific irresponsibility destroyed its confidence, had, like the ancient world of the fourth century B.C., a serene attitude of rational idealism within its grasp. The greatest necessity is to avoid another "failure of nerve."

Stonegrave, Yorks HERBERT READ

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BOOKS

SPECIAL BOOK NUMBER

Poetry in Australia

IT MUST be difficult for Englishmen to believe that there is such a thing as an Australian poetry. They may give ready assent to the proposition that some poetry has been written in Australia; but that is not quite the same thing. After all, the phrase "an Australian Poetry" invites the voice to speak it with pride or confidence; it implies the existence of a compact and coherent body of work which offers visible signs of a distinctive development. And whatever signs do exist, they have not yet been given to that great body of non-Australians of whom we tend to think as "the others."

The novelists are better known. Christina Stead, H. H. Richardson, Jack Lindsay, Vance Palmer, Martin Boyd, all have their English readers; but in poetry we are falsely, and somewhat dismally, represented in England by Adam Lindsay Gordon or by W. J. Turner and John Manifold—age and educational background will determine your choice.

This fact alone may give rise to the belief—which many Australians share—that the national achievement in poetry is overshadowed by the work of the fiction-writers. It is, I believe, a conclusion which the facts stubbornly refuse to support. Our poetry, in fact, is the more advanced art; for where our novels tend to be stodgy and lacking in depth of background, our best poets of the past forty years may be said to have created their own background, and to have done so with a surprising efficiency. So we find, in the work of R. D. Fitzgerald, for example, a poetry which, while not insisting on its own local roots, could hardly have been written in any country but this:

Poised at time's focus on strong wings,
like birds turned sharply into the gust,
your kisses have linked me to wise things
saner than envy or distrust:
Space for this moment is not more
than a swollen raindrop, which could burst
here at my lips and spill its store
of riches on my clamouring thirst.

Those recurring images which have come to be basic to the work of our poets are completely congruous with the Australian landscape, and have revealed its qualities in a new and poetically apt way. Climatically, of course, Australia is as varied as any other country; but one fact dominates the deserts of Central Australia as it does the semitropical lushness of North Queensland and the mild various region of Victoria, from which I am writing. This is the presence of light—light abundant and everywhere. Henry Handel Richardson has spoken of the Australian abroad as a man bitterly conscious of the absence of light, and thirsting for its native presence in his homeland. There can be no doubt as to the justice of her remark. In Australia, there is no very marked chiaroscuro, but an incredible variety and subtlety of lights and colours. Everything refracts or reflects, everything is part of a landscape built with light—qualities, whether it be the light of the harsh irreconcilable northern sun, or the subtle dissolving lights of the southern bush. To such a pattern, to such a changing presence, the foreigner's eye can bring neither the thrill of accurate expectation nor the comfort of custom. And in such a land, it is difficult to imagine the growth of a sophisticated, urban poetry, a poetry whose main and proper quality is urbanity. We have two huge and several considerable cities; but they are not cities in the European sense; they are commercial shells surrounded by suburbs, many of which retain the quality of a garden not entirely tamed, and which, at a certain distance from their commercial centre, take on the character of a country town. So, while most of our best poets

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are men of the cities, they are most imperfectly urbanised. However sophisticated their attitudes, however profound their learning, they are given in imagination to a wider world of natural images than could be provided within the bounds of a city.

IT IS for this reason, as much as for any other, that the poetry of the last thirty years has been an attempt to place Australia in historical perspective, and to make her present to the imagination as an entity, existing in time and space separate and complete. The theme of such men as Kenneth Slessor and R. D. Fitzgerald has been that of discovery and exploration; while the theme of younger poets, such as A. D. Hope, Judith Wright, and James McAuley, may be stated loosely as that of adaptation to a reality which is spiritual and social, as well as historical. Australia, after all, is very unlike the rest of the dominions. She is not, as Canada and South Africa are, the bulge of a continent; she is not, as New Zealand is, a brace of small islands. She is a continent; "the sea is all around us"; our shores are bounded by three great oceans and a number of minor seas. And although the fog may not be very often in the fir-tree, the sea provides one part of that whole imaginative context of which the bush is the other great reality. It would not be too much to say that these two realities are the imaginative poles of most Australian poetry, good and bad. And to balance our legion of bush-lovers, we may set Kenneth Slessor, who is peculiarly the poet of the sea-approaches to Australia:

I looked out of my window in the dark
At waves with diamond quills and combs of light
That arched their mackerel-backs and smacked the sand
In the moon's drench, that straight enormous glaze,
And ships far off asleep, and Harbour-buoys
Tossing their fireballs wearily each to each,
And tried to hear your voice, but all I heard
Was a boat's whistle, and the scraping squeal
Of seabirds' voices far away, and bells,
Five bells. Five bells coldly ringing out.
Five bells.

Our poets, therefore, tend to develop their statements around certain great primal images, which are used and interpreted in such a way that the atmosphere created by them is a distinctively Australian one. Once this is understood, it becomes a minor feat of adaptation to realise how these images may be used as symbols of a specifically human situation. There are images of sea, bush, night, stars, employed with such a sense of their magnitude that they become at once evocations of the Australian landscape and symbols of human desires. This kind of simultaneity is, no doubt, pretty often achieved in all literatures; but in our literature, it enables the poets to create a sense of breadth, of freshness, of man living in a whole cosmos as his native environment. Many Australian poets and commentators, in their awareness of this fact, have allowed themselves to be seduced by the idea of a narrow Australian-ness; and they have, with the loss of their virtue, canonised the cause of the loss. For them, the spirit of the country can be made into poetry by the frequent mention of distinctively Australian properties. But such a conception of poetry is more proper to primitive than to civilised man; it is a conception which reaches out, hopelessly and desperately, towards an animistic regard for names and crude visual images. The point I am making is of an utterly different sort. It is as much as to say that Australian poets have recognised the impossibility of an adequate treatment of the human predicament without placing it in the context of a broad imaginative world, redolent of those great presences with which Australian poets are so much at home. This may be the reason for our recent poets giving themselves so much to narrative poetry.

For the best of them do not wish to restrict themselves to a mere nature poetry. It is true that we no longer image the native landscape in the terms beloved of Rossetti and Tennyson; it is equally true that the sense of magnitude of which I have just been speaking has little in common with the pallid personifications of our 19th century expatriate English. Whatever else may be said of the deficiencies of Australian poetry, it must be admitted that our imaginations have come to be at home in their own place. Australia is no longer the Babylon beside whose waters hopeless tears are shed for the Zion of English lanes. Yet we are not Rousseauistic nature lovers, either. The point of maturity has been reached at which such a poet as A. D. Hope can savagely speak of present-day Australia as

A woman beyond her change of life, a breast
Still tender but within the womb is dry;

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at which Judith Wright may tenderly humanise the landscape to

Your delicate dry breasts, country who built my heart;

and at which James McAuley is able to combine the attitudes of love and impatience as he adroitly pricks the bubble of national conceit:

Where once was a sea is now a salty sunken desert,
A futile heart within a fair periphery;
The people are hard-eyed, kindly, with nothing inside them,
The men are independent but you could not call them free.

And I am fitted to that land as the soul is to the body,
I know its contractions, waste, and sprawling indolence;
They are in me and its triumphs are my own,
Hard-won in the thin and bitter years without pretence.

IT WOULD be too easy to conclude that this is an uncomplicated poetry, a poetry of impersonal comment and simple statement. It would be both easy and false. For each of these poets, in his use of evocative images, is making his work confront the reality of his life on all sides. If each is a nature poet, he is also a poet of society, and a poet whose comment has a broadly religious base.

The tradition of Australian poetry has always been one, if not of social comment, at least of some kind of social commitment. It is difficult to inhabit an ivory tower in the middle of a boom town; and the attempt can safely be left to certain painters, scientists, and executive "artistes." The writers, for their part, have always been conscious that the process of poetry somehow forces on them the highest responsibilities of citizenship. This emphasis has often had distressing consequences; but there seems to be no way of avoiding it; and the few attempts which have been made at a *poésie dégagée* have all ended either in artistic sterility or in the confusions of warring cliques.

The reasons for the social bent of most Australian poetry are here irrelevant; the fact is more important than its presumed causes. The well-read Australian may admire and cleave to poetry when he finds it in Valéry or Rilke; but he will not tolerate it in his compatriots, if only for the reason that the bohemian seems so much out of place in this country. For various reasons, then, the Australian poets who have recently become dissatisfied with an analysis of a merely social sort have reacted, not by ignoring social realities, but by attempting to show in them a significance which cannot be expressed simply in social terms.

If our poets have always insisted on a social commitment, they have not always seen it in an artistically satisfying way. A New Zealand critic has recently taken us to task for our endemic tendency to see ourselves, if not as prophets, at least as licensed commentators; and a leading Australian novelist, Mr. Vance Palmer, has stated that the social bent of some writers, rooted as it is in "the legend of the Nineties," derives from a sentimental interpretation of our history. I find it impossible to disagree with these two writers, but would continue the analysis further. There *was* a revolt in the nineties of the last century, a revolt against the sentimental and Anglicising tendencies of the reigning poets; and this defence of Australianness against the foreigner was given an added piquancy in being supported largely by Irishmen. There has been an unfortunate tendency to leave the matter there, to continue to express their revolt in its original terms—or, if any extension was made, it was an extension in a straight line, gaining, as it progressed, nothing of subtlety or depth. Our best poets, including those whom I mentioned earlier, have not abandoned the social interests of their predecessors. On the contrary, they have deepened those interests, in the realisation that, while they remained no more than social interests, they were an insufficient expression of the needs of Australian man.

On the other hand, there are the Left-Wing poets to be considered. With us, Left-wingery was not the concern of a decade; it has been for seventy years a strong and continuing element. At the moment its values lie, splenetic and inexact, in the hands of the Communists and their sympathisers; and, if we except John Manifold, it gives those hands the scent of the imaginative hothouse in which most propaganda poetry has its genesis. It is they who remain sixty years in the past, while others (who do not share their beliefs) do their proper work for them.

THE confused striving towards maturity has resulted in the best Australian poetry being, to English eyes, hardly modern at all. Whether or not this is a deficiency it would be

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ungracious to debate. What is potentially lasting in our present work has, of course, been influenced by the course of modern poetry as it has run, in England and America, down to the disturbed present from Eliot and Pound. But the influence has been restricted to the work of mental stimulation and the inculcation of certain stylistic tricks; our poetry has at no stage been *determined* by what has been going on overseas; and in its central course it has not, I think, received a lasting impetus from its influences. It has developed largely independent of any boiling-over outside its own recognised shores. I cannot help thinking that the erratic development of English poetry over the past thirty years has contributed something to the present consternation in England over cultural values. Those English poets (and their name is legion) who before the war savoured the uncomplicated delights of reportage have been able, since the war's end, to change to the business of assiduously feeding on the minor emotions. When "objectivity" is cast out, the seven devils of a controlled surrealism are only too ready to enter in and take its place.

But Australia, isolated and parochial as it is, has been quite untroubled by these all-too-parochial switches and delays. Most Australian poets will not respond to an image unless it is adequately accounted for by the statement in which it resides; and they have a certain justice in their reluctance. Where the horizons, however concealed, are known to be long and broad and lighted, surrealism and her offspring cannot help appearing faintly silly. And it is a queer blend of casualness and puritanical devotion to the job in hand which causes our poets to eschew experimentalism and to put their trust in an earnest reworking of forms which are more or less traditional. Judith Wright has been heavily influenced by Eliot, and James McAuley has been more lightly affected by Yeats; but they have both been influenced in a recognisably Australian way, a way which combines a stubborn independence with the idea that literary forms ought to be determined by the joint needs of the poet and of his material.

Modern Australian poetry, then, is not simply *behind* European poetry in its development; it is to a large extent apart from it. This may be a bad thing, or it may be good; I tend with grave reservations to the latter judgement; for although our insularity is rather stifling, it

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is an insularity achieved on a very large island indeed; and it has prevented our poetry from swinging desperately into conformity with whatever naturalistic cause happens, at any given moment, to reflect the obscure desires of the *Zeitgeist*.

MY PERSONAL view is that our poetry has, through its natural development, been presented now with a wonderful opportunity for growth and deepening. It is on an awareness of this fact that I attempt to base my own work. We live in the shadow of Asia, and must in charity take for her salvation whatever responsibility we can. Yet, for the poet, there is also a complementary duty; it is the duty of achieving a formal poetic wedding of the Australian fact and the European tradition. Richness and spiritedness reside not only in the landscape but also in the mind; and the mind's roots are driven down in the soil of Europe. If our poetry has one overriding defect, it is an insufficient love for the richness of the mind as it is enlivened by the senses, and an insufficient sense of tradition. We cannot pretend to cultural maturity while we continue to find our own country "picturesque," and the lives of its inhabitants material for a travelling reporter. The social and religious impulses of poetry must concern themselves with life by responding to what realities confront us here and now. And for my own part, while I am content to be called a "religious poet," I should be horrified to read in this term the implication that I am the practitioner of a special branch of poetry, a special genre. Religious poetry in our age must be incarnational, or it will become neither religious nor poetic.

And for this very reason, I feel, poetry must be seen not only as a craft (much less as a mere form of self-indulgence), but as a vocation; it is a way of making contact with the lives of our fellow-men, not in the manner of the journalist, but by striving to immerse oneself in those spiritual waters whose presence bears witness to the springs of life itself. As a corollary, one sees and investigates one's own interior life not as something exotic and distinctive, as one's exclusive property, but rather as representative of all human life, however warped and stunted it may seem in actuality. There is no other way in which the poet *may* be a representative of the people. Such, at any rate, is my understanding of my own task; and so, I think, are the best of our younger poets coming to envision the implication of their vocations—even of their very existence.

Vincent Buckley

AM I THAT I AM?

I REALLY have no business reviewing a work of fiction at all. In the first place, I can no more imagine myself writing one than I can imagine myself doing up a parcel properly. In the second, my tastes are much too limited. For me, a novel should be short—not more than 350 pages—and, preferably, funny. I like novels to be about my betters, in body, wit, energy, breeding, or bank balance; I know that there are many admirable persons who live in poky flats and drink cocoa but I don't want to hear about them. (The genius of Dickens, my favourite novelist, lies in his capacity to transform the lower middle class into an aristocracy which it would be a privilege for any Proust to enter.) When, therefore, as happens now and then, as happens in this case, I see before me a novel written by an old friend, it is with trepidation and the prayer "O God, please let me like it" that I take it up. Taking up *Cards of Identity*,* I looked first to see how many pages I should have to get through—370. A bit on the long side, but possible. Then, like those who consult the Bible for guidance, I opened at three pages taken at random, one near the beginning, one near the end, and one somewhere in the middle, and read a passage on each, a procedure which I have found infallible in judging a new volume of poetry but which is, I suppose, very unfair to a piece of fiction. I found:

Page 2: *There was a time when you were* younger *and had more* spirit, *when you got the rich person* first *and the horse*

* *Cards of Identity*. By NIGEL DENNIS. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 15s.

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The book editors of twenty-four American newspapers were recently polled by the *Cleveland News* as to which books published in the United States in 1954 they considered most outstanding. Among the eight non-fiction books chosen, four were British books. And of these four, two were Constable titles: THE YOUNG MELBOURNE and LORD M. (David Cecil), published in one volume in the States but available separately in this country; and THE REASON WHY (Cecil Woodham-Smith).

Constable

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second. *Often you found that the friendship could be made and kept without the help of a horse. Did Mr. Truter, your bosom friend, have a horse? No. He had a Rolls. Did old Miss Mallet ride? Only in a bathchair. But you wheeled her in it.*

Page 353: *Without any disrespect to the present incumbent of the chair, I must say that I shall always think the defunct occupant was the better man. When the present incumbent passes on, I shall proceed to think that* he *was. I consider this perfectly natural. The car we used to have is always the one that started on a cold morning: we have to have a new car to appreciate this fact.*

Page 239: *I quite understand why it should be thought necessary to write this sort of obituary; the only thing I have against it is that it causes people to try and read between the lines, with the result that they often suspect the deceased of crimes of which he or she is completely innocent. Thus, it was no surprise to me to hear someone say, some months later, that Violet had been secretly married to a sheik, whom she had poisoned because he had betrayed her with other women; and that the master had spent a year in prison for importuning women in Shaftesbury Avenue. Such stories are harmful, because they arouse the passions of younger people, who unconsciously model themselves on the legendary identity and, later in life, are found performing acts of crime, such as poisoning and importuning, which they believe to be purely imitative, when in fact they are entirely original.*

By this time I was certain I was going to enjoy Mr. Dennis's book—it was clearly my sort of novel—but how excellent I was to find it when I had read the whole, I had not the remotest conception. Hoping that such praise from me is not the kiss of death, I can only say that I have read no novel published during the last fifteen years with greater pleasure and admiration.

In formulating the problem upon which *Cards of Identity* is based, Mr. Dennis may have got suggestions from many foreign sources, Kafka, Pirandello, my *bête noir* Dostoievsky, even the "existentialists," but his treatment is purely English, in the tradition of writers like Ben Jonson, Peacock, and Wyndham Lewis. His book is very funny and unbelievably tough, a jolly farce which, nevertheless, makes all those naturalistic novels in which men beat each other up, women die of syphilis, and no lavatory would dream of flushing seem the work of vegetarian social workers. Mr. Dennis has come to the same conclusion as the sociologist David Riesman, namely, that 20th century society is "other directed" and he does not approve. This society which he explores and exposes in all its aspects, its attitudes to class and culture, its sexual relations, its political behaviour, was foreseen by 19th century figures like Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, and the following passages might well have served him as epigraphic texts.

Just as the children's crusade may be said to typify the Middle Ages, precocious children are typical of the present age. In fact one is tempted to ask whether there is a single man left who, for once, commits an outrageous folly. Nowadays not even a suicide kills himself in desperation. Before taking the step he deliberates so long and so carefully that he literally chokes with thought.

While the collective impression of such future Europeans will probably be that of numerous, talkative, weak-willed, and very handy workmen who require *a master, a commander, as they require their daily bread; while, therefore, the democratising of Europe will tend to the production of a type prepared for* slavery *in the most subtle sense of the term: the strong man will necessarily in individual and exceptional cases become stronger and richer than he has perhaps ever been before—owing to the unprejudicedness of his schooling, owing to the immense variety of practice, art, and disguise.*

In *Cards of Identity*, there are two sets of characters, the slaves who are delighted to be provided with imaginary identities since they cannot believe in or accept the ones they have, and the masters, the members of the Identity Club, who have learnt how to manufacture imaginary persons to their profit. Thus the Mallets take charge of Henry Paradise, a former gentleman parasite on the rich who, since the war, can find no one on whom to practise his vocation, and turn him into Jellicoe, their overworked and underpaid butler.

"*I hope you have supplied him with a rich, full past,*" *said Mrs. Mallet.*

"*Everything a respectable steward could want.*

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As a lad, I decided, he ran away to sea. Twenty years of drink and women followed in all parts of the world. Now, at last, he is going straight and though we cannot quite *assure him that he will ever atone for his sins we can at least assure him that he is no longer trying to escape reality."*

"Has he been with us long?"

"A good many years. He came straight here from the Navy. I found him, dead-drunk, in a Portsmouth gutter."

"I suppose he is still dreadfully ashamed."

"Wouldn't you be? He owes me a debt he can never repay."

"Does he still drink?"

"We stumble upon him sometimes taking a secret pull."

"He took well to a watery past, did he?" asked Beaufort.

"He couldn't resist it. The internal struggle of it all fascinated him. I mean, the long healthy hours at sea, followed by the revolting excesses of shore-leave."

Such a situation can provide comedy enough but Mr. Dennis does not stop there; he goes on to show something which Nietzsche did not guess, that masters who succeed in ruling by fraud must succumb to the same disease of unreality as their slaves. A tyrant who rules by force has only an objective enemy to fear, someone with greater force, but a tyrant who finds that he can make other people believe anything cannot escape the subjective demon of doubt which suggests that perhaps he only *believes* he wants to be a tyrant; every successful lie weakens the liar's hold upon reality. Whatever horrors may be in store for us, at least one nightmare, that of a world in which a small élite still speak among themselves a real language while they rule the masses by Double Talk, can never come true.

As THIS novel proceeds, therefore, we find that the Club members are just as ridiculous as their dupes, and just as unreal.

Our first step to freedom was to depersonalise the patient by calling him Mr. X or Miss Y. There is nothing like algebra in this respect. It really gives the brain a chance. But it was no final solution: our equation still had to wait for an X or Y before it could be printed in a book. So, in the end, we got rid of the patient altogether. We keep only enough to bring us in a small income and solve the servant problem. We write our case histories with a purity

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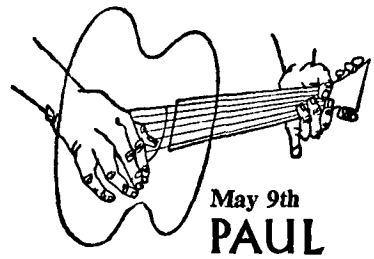

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JONATHAN CAPE

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of invention and ingenuity impossible in the days when someone was always coming into the room. But this is where I wish to make my warning. I must remind you that liberty must not breed laziness. I expect the histories we are about to hear to be of a high order. They must be plausible. The invented patients must sound like real people.

Needless to say, neither the givers of the papers, Dr. Bitterling the authority on symbols, Dr. Shubunkin the sexologist, Father Golden Orfe, the ascetic who is a heavy drinker and has fixed his point of self-recognition precisely midway between religious faith and the hip-flask, nor the heroes of the stories they tell: the Co-warden of the Badgeries who eases a stuffed or token badger out of a symbolic den with a symbolical gold spade, the young gentleman who in certain moods thinks he is a normal husband crushed underfoot by a contemptuous wife and in others that he is that wife, dreaming nightly of abduction by a male gorilla, the ex-Communist secret agent who has become a monk and a professional writer of confessions—none of these could be described as a real person, but their various forms of unreality have become so common that few readers, I fancy, will not be made acutely uncomfortable by at least one of them.

Text-books on Child Psychology are legion, but in which of them can one find such insights as these?

What fun it was in those dear, bygone days to hear mother and father talk sex! "Let's always," my father told her, "speak frankly about sex before the child, so that we don't give society a maladjusted dwarf." These words are my earliest recollection : I think I was about three at the time. They impressed me because I hated the thought of becoming a maladjusted dwarf, and it seemed that conversation about sex, whatever that might be, was the one thing that would make me grow.

I would like to interject here a warning to parents. None of you, I am sure, wants to see your son become first a secret agent of Materialism and then a public-relations agent of the Incomprehensible. Well, you can prevent this from happening if you will only hold your tongue and stop bragging about the little chap. Whenever I felt lazy or vapid and put on a moon-face, my father always bellowed at the top of his voice: "Just look at him! With the other children you always know where you are, but you never know with him what's at the back of his *mind!" It had not occurred to me before that I had a back to my mind, but once this area had been brought to my attention as the place where admiration is found, I took a life-lease on the premises. When my parents said: "Well, boys, we have a surprise today: we're going to take you to the circus," I never turned a hair. While my brothers cat-called and hurrahed, I sat with a pudding-face, looking, if anything, more depressed than pleased. My father was enthralled. "Just look at the little b——!" he would shriek, "not a squeak out of him! I wonder what's going on* inside—at the back?" *My mother would tousle my hair and murmur fondly: "A mother* always *knows. He's more thrilled than all the rest of them put together—that's why he's so quiet."*

Perhaps the most significant symptom of our age is that its love and admiration is given, not to those who do or make, but to those who perform, not to soldiers, scientists, or artists but to film-stars, night-club singers, conductors, so that, today, a politician succeeds, not through the appeal of his programme, but through his ability to put on a good act. An actor is, by definition, someone with no identity of his own. In the first work about an identity-less hero, *Hamlet*, there is a play within a play, and *Cards of Identity* also contains one, a pseudo-Shakespearian Late Comedy written and performed by middle-class persons who have been persuaded that they belong to the Servant's Hall and now imagine that they are servants playing at being medieval Kings and Queens.

I have been allowed only forty-eight hours in which to read and review this novel, which is not long enough to judge so daring a device as the introduction of a parody blank-verse drama. I am certain that the idea is right, but I have not had the time to discover its exact effect on the characters in the novel who perform it nor just what it reveals about them. For those who, like myself, enjoy good parody, this does not matter so much; they will like it, relevant or irrelevant, for its own sake. I think it possible—this, mind you, is after only one reading—that Mr. Dennis has been a little self-indulgent and that the play could be shorter. But good parody it surely is.

CATRIONA. *Once, in a moral play, good ma'am,*
I was the part of a Lazarian nun.
My eyes so low they bandied with my toes
And all agreed I was the thing itself.

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HART-DAVIS

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But that's long since, and many a broad moustache
Has rubbaged off the mantle of my bloom. Yet,
I could feign once more.

HERMIONE. *Nay, Catriona, nuns are grown naughty.*
At night, when all's asleep, the Abbess
Rises, and takes a pick and spade in hand.
Helped by her sisters, emulating moles,
They tunnel underground for leagues and leagues,
Come up at last i' the Bishop's cell
And ravish every friar.

CATRIONA. *Is't so, Madam? Why, when*
I've walked the meadows, I've remarked
How, underfoot, the ground springs up and down.
I'd not believe 'twas all athrob with nuns.

HERMIONE. *Catriona, we must be friars.*

CATRIONA. *What, Madam? Do friars not tunnel too?*

HERMIONE. *Nay, 'tis woman's work, sappery.*

CATRIONA. *What of our beards, Madam? Can we raise them up*
And set them to our chins?

HERMIONE. *We'll be young friars, in whom the academy*
Hath gaoled the refulgent whisker under skin.

CATRIONA. *And what thereafter, ma'am, when we're made vicars?*

HERMIONE. *Thereafter comes hereafter, we shall see*
What chance and skill provide. Attend
The chapel vestry, Catriona, bring two garbs.

Reading this sort of thing, I yearn for the good old days when one lived in a real house instead of an apartment and there was mother's clothes-closet to rifle for garbs.

W. H. Auden

"THE AFFAIR"

IN ALL history there is no better detective story than "L'Affaire Dreyfus." For that very reason it has often been inaccurately told. It lends itself too easily to melodrama. Dreyfus himself—the conscientious, professional, decent little man—is a perfect new-style central figure of tragi-comedy, the sort Charlie Chaplin might play to perfection in his pathetic manner, while the story itself might have been made for the cinema. An appalling act of treason has been committed, secret military documents from the French War Ministry have been sold to the German Embassy in Paris. There is a handwriting clue from which, in good faith, the authorities believe the innocent little Jewish officer, Alfred Dreyfus, to be the guilty man, and they arrest him. Enter the villain. Colonel Henry of the "Statistical Section" of the War Ministry (as Secret Service Headquarters are called), finding that the proofs of guilt are inadequate, proceeds with other colleagues in villainy to submit documentary evidence with which he has tampered. On this evidence Dreyfus is condemned, publicly degraded with hideous ritual, and sent to Devil's Island. So the story might have ended, but that six months later a noble *deus ex machina* takes the centre of the stage. He is called Colonel Marie-Georges Picquart. He takes charge of the "Statistical Section," and in the course of duty examines the Dreyfus records and comes to the conclusion that the court-martial (which he attended) has allowed a miscarriage of justice. In the further course of investigations he discovers the real guilty man, a Maupassant-like character called Esterhazy. All radiant with innocence, and expectant of justice and acclaim, Picquart brings these facts to the attention of the authorities, and the authorities are very annoyed. For what has been done cannot be undone. The military authorities cannot be made to look fools, and the Government dare not exasperate the anti-Semites by admitting that the treacherous Jew is a harmless gentleman. It

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is now more important than it ever was for the authorities to prove Dreyfus guilty, and the villain Henry eases their task by forging numerous incriminating documents. The good Picquart is removed from the War Office and sent abroad, supposedly on duty, but in obvious fact because he is a nuisance. But already this good Picquart has so strengthened the forces of right and light that the forces of darkness are compelled to take some official action against Esterhazy. The latter is court-martialled in 1898, but thanks to Henry's perjuries and forgeries, he is acquitted. Here the story might have ended again, but that a prophet arises and thunders on the side of truth. The name of the prophet, of course, is Emile Zola. This is the decisive moment because, although the prophet bungles the case hopelessly, the sheer noise made by Zola means that the whole public becomes interested and it is now impossible to avoid a thorough investigation. When this has been done the military make a last effort to fool all the people for all time by returning a demonstrably false verdict of guilty at Rennes, but the cat is out of the bag and is never to be got in it again. The forgeries have been discovered, Esterhazy has fled, Henry has committed suicide, and at long last justice is done in 1905, and in 1906 Dreyfus and Picquart are formally reinstalled, promoted, decorated, and the truth is seen to prevail.

Such is the story as generally believed, and as it served as the subject of a very good film in the thirties. It is not an untrue version of what happened, but a highly beautified one. In an extremely able book,* Mr. Guy Chapman has endeavoured to relate in detail what really happened, in a "reassessment" which he has made from examining the enormous literature and documentation of the case. He has cleared his mind of all prejudice and produced a definitive record.

IT CAN be charged against Mr. Chapman that he occasionally leans a little too far backwards in his determination not to plunge into a tale of right and wrong, for when all is said the wickedness of Henry and his fellow conspirators in keeping the innocent Dreyfus in the appalling imprisonment of Devil's Island for no greater purpose than to safeguard pro-

* *The Dreyfus Case. A Reassessment.* By GUY CHAPMAN. Hart-Davis. 25s.

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fessional reputations is almost incredible. Their crime was the more atrocious in that the French army, as Mr. Chapman insists, was revered in a religious spirit in those days, was looked up to by men of all parties as the guardian of the country's good name, and the repository of "*toutes les gloires.*" Perhaps that is why so many officers behaved so badly. To be adored is unsteadying for any institution and quite fatal for a military one.

In spite, however, of some honourable faults which come from extreme conscientiousness, Mr. Chapman may be said to succeed in his main contention: That the story is a moral one only in an impersonal sense, and that the people involved were for the most part helplessly caught in a web of deceit. Most of Dreyfus's persecutors were ordinary, reasonably well-intentioned people lacking in keen perception. Those on the other side were not all saints. The character of Picquart is perhaps the untidiest and least predictable thing in the story. His part makes absolute nonsense of the melodrama. He was an emotional man but his quite admirable behaviour in "L'Affaire" was without any trace of sentiment. He was simply opposed in principle to erroneous judgements and he cared not twopence for the unmerited sufferings of Dreyfus and his family. The idea that the injustice was part of an anti-Semitic plot is only half true: the original court-martial was hardly influenced by that prejudice, and the exploitation of the case by anti-Semites came later and was not an army movement. But the strangest evidence against the popular view that Dreyfus was primarily the victim of anti-Semitism is that Picquart, the saviour of this man chained to a rock, was himself a life-long anti-Semite. His feelings in this matter were so little under control that they made him behave with cruel discourtesy to Dreyfus when the latter wrote to thank him for his help.

The mild character of the hero himself is constantly surprising. Alfred Dreyfus was evidently a very good and very colourless man. In his young days he seems to have been priggish as colourless people often are, and conceited about his professional ability. Nothing worse is alleged against him. When his martyrdom was over, the immense political interest which had been formed by his wrongs looked to him to serve political purposes. But he failed his supporters. France had been torn in two by the case, but Dreyfus himself was without hatred. He had no harsh words even for the generals by whom he had been condemned, and he refused to take the remarkable opening which fate had given him towards a career in the higher rabble-rousing. He was only concerned with taking up his professional life again where it had been broken off, and this attitude understandably angered and disappointed the politicians on his side. Dreyfus forgave everyone, and was regarded as very self-centred for doing so.

The comic relief in the drama is to be found in the dilemmas of the foreign military attachés and their superiors. When Esterhazy first went to the German military attaché and offered himself as a spy, Schwarzenkoeppen, like a good Prussian, implored him not to do anything so professionally disreputable, and only consented with reluctance to dealing with this renegade. When the Dreyfus court-martial came on, this conscientious officer did not connect it with the treason of Esterhazy for some time. By a curious error the sale of documents was first reported to have been concluded with the Italian military attaché, so there followed a puzzled correspondence between the Embassies, and at regular intervals the German and Italian ambassadors, and their Governments, made solemn and public declarations that they had had no traffic with Dreyfus at any time, and no one paid the slightest attention. There were frequent rumours, fostered by Henry, that there had been some sort of correspondence between Dreyfus and the German Emperor. Mr. Guy Chapman is too careful to speculate when there is no documentation to build on, but it is surely allowable to suppose that such rumours about so incurably an indiscreet person as William II must have caused some doubt, occasionally, somewhere, on the German side—"Strictly between ourselves, Herr Reichskanzler, you do not think, do you, that perhaps the All Highest really did . . ." Well there is no evidence for any such worried whisperings, unless we count the fact that the rumours were frequently on William's mind.

MR. GUY CHAPMAN is not only a meticulously exact historian but he is a born story-teller, and he never lets his precise diagnosis take away from the thrills of this unique and terrible, though happily-ending, episode. Nevertheless he surprisingly tells nothing about one arresting detail. Among the

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journalists who were covering the case in its first stages was a Jewish man of letters, Theodor Herzl, at that time Paris correspondent of the *Neue Freie Presse*. He was deceived, as everyone was, about Dreyfus's guilt, but it is recorded by several of his friends that the sudden violence of the popular reaction opened his eyes for the first time to the strength of anti-Semitism in the West, and he became seized with the idea of a mass-emigration of Jews from Europe. Immediately after the first court-martial in 1895, Herzl wrote his famous book, *Der Judenstaat*, and the Zionism which forty-three years later founded a Jewish republic in Palestine was born. Of all the many consequences which flowed from the initial misreading of the handwriting this was surely the most remarkable and the most spectacular. It ought to have been mentioned.

The spirit of drama never left the Dreyfus Affair. Esterhazy obtained a refuge in England, and thereafter ran true to form. The last glimpse of him to be had by anyone who left a record was of the traitor disguised anew as an Irishman called Fitzgerald, writing articles against the country which had given him desperately needed shelter. Schwarzenkoeppen died in Berlin in 1917. On his deathbed he was suddenly heard to cry: "Frenchmen, hear me! Dreyfus is innocent!" The hero himself lived into old age and died in 1935. He acquitted himself honourably in the First World War and continued to disappoint his partisans with his detachment and lack of emotion. He was heard to say that Auguste Mercier, the War Minister under whom he had been condemned. and whose evidence had procured the fraudulent verdict at the second court-martial, was not deserving of all the abuse he received. Mr. Chapman has a beautiful last scene: "During his later years [Dreyfus] liked to play bridge. One evening his partner remarked that a certain X had been arrested for espionage, and then, realising the tactlessness of his remark, added that he did not suppose there was anything in it. Dreyfus, calmly dealing, rejoined: 'Oh, I don't know; after all, there's never smoke without fire.'"

Christopher Sykes

GRAVE AND GAY

> *First:* style. . . . Polished, correct, decorous, but never original, never personal, never fresh. Full of vague generalisations, discursive where it should be brief, brief where it should be discursive, in effect entirely redundant because entirely the result of application. A style without character, the style of a diligent composition in which there is not the slightest trace of poetical feeling. *Second:* plasticity. None. States things instead of representing them, writes them instead of portraying them. Lack of evident truth, of volume, of solidity. . . . The book of a dilettante, of a person who, though endowed with intelligence, culture, and taste, is completely lacking in creative powers.

Stop me if you've heard this one—and I can hardly believe that some ingenious American hasn't told it long ago—but that quotation comes from "Remarks upon the story *Conjugal Love*, by Silvio Baldeschi," Baldeschi being, of course, the hero of a real story, also for some reason called *Conjugal Love*, by a real man, Signor Alberto Moravia. Not only is "the story *Conjugal Love*" by Silvio Baldeschi; the "remarks upon" it are by him too. He's sort of reviewing his own book, you see. Before making everything clear in this way I was going to suggest that, apart from the references to "plasticity" and what-not, old Baldeschi's remarks would be hard to improve at short notice as a verdict on his creator's latest, *A Ghost at Noon*.*

To begin with, this new one is a remake (and, like all remakes, less satisfactory) of *Conjugal Love*, with the same timid, snobbish, glum, slow-witted hero, the same sensual, "enigmatic" wife, and the same sort of meagre, repetitive, snail-paced story. Riccardo Molteni, a young writer of film-scripts, finds that his wife despises him. She won't say why. They go to Capri to work, with a producer named Battista

* *A Ghost at Noon*. By ALBERTO MORAVIA. Secker and Warburg. 12s. 6d.

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and a director named Rheingold, on a film of the *Odyssey*. Rheingold's proposed interpretation of the poem turns Odysseus into a sophisticate despised by the primitive Penelope for not killing the suitors—so he kills the suitors. Molteni reflects, without feeling too sure about it or ever having it confirmed, that perhaps his wife despises him for not "killing" (i.e. punching, quarrelling with, refusing to work for, etc.) Battista, who's obviously interested in her. Eventually she leaves Capri with Battista, though not as his mistress, and gets killed in his car. Round about that time Molteni sees her ghost on the beach and takes it out for a row. That's all.

This summary may give some idea of the lack of development and even of any very positive direction to be found in the book. It can hardly indicate Signor Moravia's appalling poverty of invention, his inability to find any outlet in incident either for the wife's "despising" or for the hero's feelings of depression and futility. This is where our pal Baldeschi comes in. His analysis of this book would take account of the passion for abstract descriptions of states of mind, for "vague generalisation" and for the "discursive" shown here:

> . . . I was conscious of a feeling of envy for those who did not suffer from such troubles, for the wealthy and the privileged; and this envy, I observed, was accompanied—still against my will—by a feeling of bitterness towards them, which, in turn, did not limit its aim to particular persons or situations, but, as if by an uncontrollable bias, tended to assume the general, abstract character of a whole conception of life. In fact, during those difficult days, I came very gradually to feel that my irritation and my intolerance of poverty were turning into a revolt against injustice, and not only against the injustice which struck at me personally, but the injustice from which so many others like me suffered. I was quite aware of this almost imperceptible transformation of my subjective resentments into objective reflections and states of mind, owing to the bent of my thoughts which led always and irresistibly in the same direction. . . .

A very great deal of the book is like that, and if we go on to wonder how it could ever have got about that Signor Moravia is an important novelist, we might reflect that a weighty, consequential, humourless manner can still draw the plaudits of the intellectuals, even in 1955. Baldeschi wasn't being merely bitter when he foresaw a *succès d'estime* for his own effort if he published it; "*but the book itself*," he knew, "*does not count.*"

THE new Graham Greene* differs from the new Moravia in an impressive number and variety of ways. I found it excellent value as far as it went, and I hope that next time Mr. Greene will go further along this kind of route. The story, though slight, is engaging: a middle-ageing accountant, relying on large promises of hospitality from his yacht-owning boss, takes his girl to Monte Carlo for wedding and honeymoon. The boss doesn't pitch up for a long time and meanwhile the accountant wins a lot of money at the tables, so much that he gets the chance of buying some vital shares that will give him control of the boss's business. The girl doesn't like him winning all that money and plotting to gain power with it, so she goes off with a young Frenchman who, not being an accountant, always loses at the tables. Finally the boss does pitch up, but I won't reveal how Mr. Greene undoes the knot. Anyway, he does it—and everything else in this book—very agreeably and skilfully. The dialogue between the accountant and the girl is splendid; I've seldom read so truthful an account of how people in love behave to each other, even to those touches of silliness which might so easily have been merely wet, but in Mr. Greene's hands are amusing and even charming.

Good-oh, then; and it's only when we look back on the comic episodes in Mr. Greene's earlier novels that some slight dissatisfaction may emerge. There's nothing in this one, for instance, to compete with the outrageously funny pursuit of Mrs. Scobie by Wilson in *The Heart of the Matter*, nor with the accounts of Wilson's beetle-hunting fandangoes with his quasi-chum Harris, nor with the frequent muffled excursions into the grotesque in *The Ministry of Fear*—nothing, that is, apart from an all-too-short bit where our accountant finds himself impersonating a Belgravia colonel. I feel that perhaps Mr. Greene's huge potential gift for comedy lies more in the direction of unbridled satire, helped on by hatred and its stablemate, farce, rather than that of light romantic entertainment. Well, we haven't been given the great funny Greene novel this time, but we have been encouraged to hope for its early appearance in the future.

* *Loser Takes All.* By GRAHAM GREENE. Heinemann. 7s. 6d.

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THE needle swings back to GLUM, right against the stop, in fact, with the next effort. One wouldn't normally bother with *Carnival by the Sea** but for the synthesis it makes of yesterday's highbrow fashions and perhaps, though I hope I'm wrong about this, the preview it affords of tomorrow's middlebrow fashions. Ed Miller, a genuine bonded 70° proof *âme damnée* (as distinct from M. Mauriac's *appellation controlée* type) is in flight from his past at a seaside resort. His stepmother is in flight from her past at the same watering-place. His half-sister is in flight not only from her past but from an insane asylum to boot, and makes it to the *plage* too. They all have a jolly time together there, though it would be hard to say what happens apart from Ed reflecting, usually "dispassionately," that the world is all screwed up, and the other two meditating on the same verity in their different idioms. In fact, nothing much really happens at all in 110,000 words, and, despite the author's almost paranoid concern with style, the notion that no style on earth can compensate for a lack of dramatised events is as relevant here as it is with Signor Moravia. Especially not this style, one is driven to add, with its incredible salad of verbless sentences, historic presents, twisted quotations, dialecticisms, Freudian puns, facetious archaisms, compound adjectives, poetical adjectives, too many adjectives. And then of course there are all the flashbacks and thought-streams and scenes done twice from different viewpoints, though I don't know whether these count as style. What is most depressing, however, is the fact that the most recognisable ghost at this *danse macabre* is that of Scott Fitzgerald, a brilliant figure, it must be admitted, in the literature of his time, but a sadly degrading influence on the writings—and possibly the conduct too—of his heirs. I wish some people would make a vow to read him right through and then forget all about him.

A ROUND of applause, finally, for Mr. Robertson Davies,† a Canadian writer whose name was new to me, but whose earlier books I mean to hunt up. On the thread of a hoax perpetrated on a local newspaper he strings a series of very sharply-drawn and very

* *Carnival by the Sea.* By SIGRID DE LIMA. Chatto and Windus. 12s. 6d.

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amusing satirical portraits. The best of these are undoubtedly Norm and Dutchy Yarrow, a married couple teaching at Waverley, the local university. He is a lecturer in psychology and she an assistant director of recreation. The psychology on which he lectures to his friends, the social recreation she directs, provide, as well as hilarity, a horrible and true comment on the kind of academic people who go round telling us what to do. There's another young man who's writing a thesis on Charles Heavysege, Shakespeare of Canadian letters and—much more important—patriarch of Amcan (American-Canadian Literature to you, and don't you forget it, because the Head of the English Faculty at Waverley says it's the coming thing). And everything that goes on in that newspaper office is wonderful. Mr. Davies might have used a more robust thread for his inventions, and I should like to see him tackling something harder, but all the same his is a most attractive talent, witty, amiable, urbane, rich in comic diversion.

It will be seen that for my money the Gays have it over the Graves every time. But it isn't only that I personally prefer a Gay to a Grave, other things being equal, because other things so rarely are equal. What I mean is that only a genius can be completely grave, can ignore all promptings of humour and irony and gaiety, without rolling over the slippery margin that divides the grave from the glum. And these days—not that it worries me at all—geniuses are thin on the ground.

Kingsley Amis

THE LAWRENCE ENIGMA

WHATEVER one's private view of T. E. Lawrence (and as the late Lord Wavell wrote, "he will always have his detractors, those who sneer at the legend, who view the man as a charlatan in search of notoriety by seeming to seek obscurity"), there can be no doubt that his short life was filled with excitement. It cannot have been easy to write a boring book about this strange man's adventures, but it must be said that Mr. Richard Aldington, in his so-called "Biographical Enquiry," has triumphantly succeeded.*

Lawrence was a highly complex character, and, like most intelligent humans, not entirely admirable. Those who knew him best have admitted his faults; he was vain, he did "back into the limelight"; and there is little doubt that he encouraged others to elaborate stories about his exploits, of which some, for the most part trivial, were almost certainly apocryphal. According to Mr. Aldington these failings were the result of Lawrence's illegitimate birth, which apparently caused such feelings of inferiority that not only did he become incapable of telling the truth, but from an early age developed a hatred for his mother. This might seem plausible in an elementary textbook on psychology, but it is not borne out by the facts. It is of course true that Lawrence conducted a long and intimate correspondence with Mrs. Bernard Shaw (their letters are now in the British Museum), but a young man who was capable of writing long and loving letters to his family, which in their printed form run to nearly four hundred pages,* can hardly be said to have been in need of a "substitute mother."

The greater part of Mr. Aldington's book is devoted to a wearisome analysis of the facts described in *The Seven Pillars*, that "pretentious strategic reverie," as he calls it. But Lawrence himself never claimed to have been writing history. "It does not," he wrote, "pretend to be impartial. I was fighting for my hand, upon my own midden. Please take it as a personal narrative pieced out of history. I could not make proper notes; indeed it would have been a breach of my duty to the Arabs if I had picked such flowers while they fought."

When I first read it, some twenty-five years ago, I thought it was the most memorable book to have come out of the First World War. A recent re-reading largely confirms that opinion,

* *Lawrence of Arabia.* By RICHARD ALDINGTON. Collins. 25s.

* *The Home Letters of T. E. Lawrence and his brothers.* Basil Blackwell. 63s.

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although I now feel that it is overwritten, too literary for its subject, and, like much other Arabian writing, too influenced by the peculiar style of Doughty. It remains however a considerable work of literature, although in Mr. Aldington's opinion "Lawrence had picked up an itch for writing but was not a writer."

In support of his thesis that Lawrence was an impostor and himself invented many of the events he describes as historical facts, Mr. Aldington has provided what at first glance looks like a critical apparatus; impressively it runs to nearly forty pages. A closer inspection however reveals it to be mostly a list of references to the pages of *The Seven Pillars*; and while I have checked many of these with the original and find them to be accurate, none of them does much to further Mr. Aldington's case. Many of them are concerned with utter trivialities, the truth or otherwise of which is of no importance.

Much of what Aldington says is true, but his book does not contain the whole truth. It is written moreover with a sneering and malicious undertone on nearly every page. It is not a "biographical enquiry," as it claims to be, but a vicious cross-examination, so to speak, of a man no longer capable of speaking in his own defence, and with the evidence in his favour rigidly suppressed. One wonders why it was written. Aldington never met Lawrence, has not visited Arabia, and did not take part in the campaign which, he says, "was of no military importance," an opinion not shared by the high commanders to whom Lawrence was responsible. Yet the book is so vindictive that it might have been written to pay off some personal score. Curiously, its only effect is to make Lawrence seem an even more romantic and interesting figure than he has previously appeared. This presumably was not what Mr. Aldington intended.

LAWRENCE'S reputation as a writer will, I believe, be immensely increased by the publication of *The Mint*,* although had it been published earlier it would have seemed more sensational than it does today; it is in reality the kind of "reportage," episodic detailed description of events, which became popular during the Second World War. It is not, as the author himself described it in one of his letters, an "iron, rectangular, abhorrent book"; nor, *pace* Mr. Aldington, who cannot have realised that it was so soon to be made available for public circulation, is it "almost insane in its attack on the female sex," which is in point of fact hardly mentioned.

These sixty-nine more or less connected (except for a break of three years between parts 2 and 3) sketches were apparently intended to form the basis of a larger work. "I had the ambition," Lawrence writes, "before I turned back in 1923 and saw the inadequacy of my *Seven Pillars* in the cold light of revision—to write a real book: and I thought to find its subject in the Royal Air Force." These few words of explanation occur in the introduction to Part 3 which describe his time at Cranwell, where at last he seems to have discovered real happiness. "And how," he notes, "can any man describe his happiness?" Because of this the original intention was abandoned. The motive is understandable, but the result is that the book in its present form is somewhat lacking in shape. There is an overemphasis on the

* *The Mint*. By T. E. LAWRENCE. Cape. 17s. 6d. Limited unexpurgated edition. £3 13s. 6d.

Stephen Spender

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more sordid side of life in the ranks, whereas it is clear from the short final part of the book that Lawrence himself had come to realise that this aspect was a superficiality; the real life of comradeship, the communal effort to gain mastery of the air, lay deeper, not immediately to be perceived.

There is extraordinary variety in the writing, particularly noticeable in the differences of pace in Part Three, which, compared with the jerky, almost angular writing of the first two parts, approaches near to a happy serenity. The literary mannerisms which I now feel mar so much of *The Seven Pillars* are still discernible, but they are much less in evidence than in the former book. *The Mint* is not, I think, a masterpiece of literature, it is too episodic for that, but no one can say after reading it that Lawrence was not a writer; as it is there are one or two descriptive passages of great beauty, notably the interpolated recollection of a visit to Queen Alexandra at Marlborough House, which might so easily have seemed cynical but for the extreme sympathy with which it is written.

It is difficult to understand why Lord Trenchard thought that the publication of this book would be a disservice to the Royal Air Force. True, it contains much harsh comment on the treatment meted out to recruits, but there is also a great deal of sound comment on the proper relationship between the men in the ranks, their N.C.Os., and officers; and some of Lawrence's thoughts about the future of the Air Force (written nearly thirty years ago) seem now to have an almost prophetic quality.

There is a rhythmic quality about Lawrence's writing that would make this a splendid book to read aloud, were it not for the so-called dirty words which occur on nearly every page. There is nothing obscene in the thoughts expressed; the words themselves, automatic in barrack-room speech, as here used are practically meaningless; they serve only for emphasis, and will excite only the excessively prurient. They have been eliminated from the ordinary edition which, except for the excision of one short paragraph (on page 159) of extreme coarseness, does not otherwise differ from the more expensive unexpurgated edition.

The Mint does not answer any of the questions posed by Mr. Aldington, but it does suggest that Lawrence, had he lived, might have become a very considerable writer.

John Morris

IDEAS ABOUT LOVE

Novelists' ideas about love have two notable peculiarities—universal selectiveness and frequent unreality. Only a small proportion of the more common varieties of love-situation are at all widely considered, and novels abound with a class of situations which largely owes its literary existence to a literary convention, though from literature members of this class sometimes issue into life. To take selectiveness first—there are many celebrated novels about unrequited love but few about unrequitable love. Though this is, after all, a relationship with two terms—unrequiter and unrequited—we are presented only with the point of view of the latter. The objects of the tumultuous passions of Philip and of George Harvey Bone in *Of Human Bondage* and *Hangover Square* are seen wholly from the outside as cold, calculating women. Yet the loved one's condition may be almost as unhappy as that of the lover. Inability to return a powerful emotion is not necessarily the same thing as callousness, yet that it is is the unspoken assumption behind the unsympathetic handling the unrequiter gets, even when, as in Dreiser's *American Tragedy*, he is the central character. Again, many novels present in a reasonably definite and detailed way what it is like to be a man making love to a woman, but, although most novels about love, and certainly most of the best ones, from Jane Austen and Emily Brontë to Elizabeth Bowen, have been written by women, the initiation of a love affair is seldom presented in an at all concrete fashion from the woman's point of view. (Mary McCarthy's *The Company She Keeps* is the only exception I can think of.) I long to read a novel in which the heroine wonders just when and how the hero is going to pounce. The more or less apprehensive loved-one deserves as much

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consideration as the nervous lover whom we all know so well. One might get the idea from most novels that all women in this situation are in a quite unexpectant and wholly lady-like haze. The general recessiveness of marriage is a final and rather more important example. Traditionally the *terminus ad quem*, and still so in that remarkable genre—the "light romance" —marriage is rarely the main framework for a novel about love. The unfortunate Karenin is just a part of the setting in which Anna and Vronsky are disposed, and Charles Bovary is not much more prominent. It is not too much to say that for most novelists marriage is primarily important as a necessary condition of infidelity.

While selectiveness at worst restricts the interest of novels, unreality actively damages the books it infects. Noteworthy and custom-hallowed examples of unreality are the Amatory Technician, the Tame Dog, and the Understanding Married Woman. The Amatory Technician is normally of Latin extraction and even more normally a "cad." He is the diabolical figure who, by approaching women as if they were musical instruments, induces them to act in a way that is hateful, delicious and universally unparticularised. His principal technical resource is a repertoire of "tricks." He appears quite a lot in the novels of Somerset Maugham. The Tame Dog is the special friend of somebody else's wife and, while not participating in all the pleasures and responsibilities of the married state, is the repository of the confidences which the husband is too preoccupied to receive and the sharer of experiences the husband is too coarse-grained to enjoy. Morally the inverse of the Amatory Technician, he is restrained by honour from the final completion of the relationship. The Understanding Married Woman is, of course, his opposite number. Her affection sustains the other end of their restricted but prolonged flirtation. She realises that they "cannot" actually make love together, though there is normally some ritual kissing, but she is prepared for any form of non-physical infidelity. She realises that "it" means so much to them and that they mean so much to each other.

I am not denying that there are people who actually think of themselves or others in these terms. Nor again that there really are some men who are better and more energetic lovers than others and that there are emotional adulterers

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and bigamists. What I am denying is that the ability to make love in an exciting way is the prerogative of rare and devoted virtuosi and that emotional bigamy is a stable, admirable, and satisfying state of affairs. The Amatory Technician is brought into being by the projection of an experience, the first revelation of the possibilities of physical love, on to a type of person abstractly calculated to produce it. Emotional bigamy is a meliorising redescription of a familiar enough situation—that in which two people want, but do not dare, to let their desires overcome their habits. These notions are delusional systems by whose agency the world is made palatable; the seducer is represented by himself and his objects as the dedicated practitioner of a craft, and cowards as noble spirits.

SELECTIVENESS and unreality are very much to the fore in Isobel Quigly's *The Eye of Heaven.** Nevertheless it is written with vigour, feeling, and intelligence. At times the care and skill with which complex states of mind are described remind one of books as good as *To The North* or *The House In Paris.* But the book's general theme is of a kind which no amount of talent and intelligence could adequately sustain. Celia with nanny and children spends a year in Italy while her husband is yet farther afield, falls in love with an Amatory Technician of the purest imaginable variety, named Arcangelo, and, after an elderly don has adopted the outcome of their passionate conjunction, returns to England to face her husband. Arcangelo's prowess is stated in traditional terms: "he taught her and they learnt together, so intricate a sensual language that Celia was aghast at its range. She felt herself for the first time an instrument of extreme precision and delicacy, yet one on which weird tricks could be played, spectacular experiments made in the name of love." Her marriage is recessive to a degree and her husband never appears on the scene, dropping out of sight altogether a good deal of the time. As Celia remarks, "Neddy grew always ghostlier until it was hard at times to believe he existed at all. . . ."

By contrast in Peter de Vries' *The Tunnel of Love*† marriage is refreshingly the centre and unfaithfulness the periphery of his concern. This book is modest, brilliant, and extremely funny. Ostensibly about the narrator's efforts to assist some rather insecurely married friends to adopt a child, it is really an elegant and highly perceptive comedy about married life. Some of the jokes are simple enough. The narrator's fantasy retreat is a hunting-lodge at Moot Point. But the more penetrating humour is evoked by the spiritual frictions of the married state; inter-marital stratagems and conflicts, prickings of jealousy aroused by the statistics of his friend Augie's love-life and, best of all, the marvellous exploitation of his wife's two weeks visit to her mother, with his determination to do better in the way of getting into "trouble" than last time and the superbly catastrophic affair in which this determination lands him. The familiar reviewer's complaint that we are never shown the works of fictional genius has no application here. For Augie is a humorous artist whose jokes are much better than his drawings and the jokes are excellent. For instance, one of two missionaries boiling in a cannibal cauldron says to the other, "our work has not been in vain, they are going to say grace." This novel is more than the amusing trifle it might superficially appear to be, it is a precise and, within its rather offhand convention, faithful commentary on married life.

Where Mr. de Vries reacts against selectiveness, Derek Barton in *Glorious Life** blows up, almost inadvertently it seems, the myth of emotional bigamy. His hero is a Tame Dog who breaks humiliatingly loose. Mr. Barton has a very exact eye and his book is much better in detail than as a whole. A rather feeble story about goings-on in the Ministry of Fine Arts contains a good deal of searching and sardonic observation of the contemporary world. A brief example: "he groaned to himself, foreseeing an evening with a rugger tough or some caravan-maker calling himself a company director." *Glorious Life* is, in fact, a rather trivial light comedy inappropriately ballasted with serious feeling. Reviewers should not complain that books are not what their authors never intended them to be, but it is perhaps reasonable to suggest that Mr. Barton has not found the proper form for his very genuine talents. Given his view of the world, a novel of entirely serious intention should be easier to

* *The Eye of Heaven.* By ISOBEL QUIGLY. Collins. 10s. 6d.

† *The Tunnel of Love.* By PETER DE VRIES. Gollancz. 12s. 6d.

* *Glorious Life.* By DEREK BARTON. Michael Joseph. 12s. 6d.

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write than the more superficial and elegant type of book he has chosen to produce. For the pervading tone of *Glorious Life* is sad and its theme is the passing and contingent character of projects, opportunities, and personal relations. I hope Mr. Barton will nerve himself to pursue the more ambitious goal he is well equipped to attain.

Finally an undeservedly brief mention of Elizabeth Hardwick's extremely subtle and distinguished short novel *The Simple Truth.** This relates the impact on two very different people—a plump, loquacious graduate and the nervy, original wife of a chemistry professor—of the trial of a young student for the murder of his socially more elevated girl-friend. The trial brings them together and allies them on the side of the accused against what they take to be the inevitable view of jury and public in the face of a wealth of unfavourable evidence. After his acquittal they are left stranded, unable or unwilling to pinpoint the source of their dissatisfaction with this result. For has the event not shown them to be afflicted with just the kind of moral insensitivity which they had implicitly attributed to everyone else? What is most impressive about *The Simple Truth* is not its thoughtfulness, nor is it the grace and clarity of its style but rather what might be called its character as a pure creation. Miss Hardwick has done for the campus what has been one of the most remarkable services of a very different writer, the much less coolly classical Henry Green; she has cut through the clutter of literary stereotypes obscuring a familiar scene.

Anthony Quinton

* *The Simple Truth.* By ELIZABETH HARDWICK. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 10s. 6d.

THE TAMING OF THE DEMONS

ART books, I am sure, encourage a lot of bad habits, principally by debauching the mind with images. This, no doubt, corresponds to the deadly sin of Luxury which attempts an endless stimulation without ever a conclusion. The aphrodisiac effect of the art-book is particularly strong when it deals with the primitive. Primitive is not necessarily the same as crude: applied to African art, sculpture, dancing, or drumming, the word denotes an impulsive rhythm which, however complicated and astonishing, is a physical skill not in the service of the Higher Reason. It is known by its spontaneous playing with traditional forms; it makes a world where the Higher Reason cannot even get a look in, which is why it is called primitive. The complexities of African drumming are indeed unmanageable by the intellect, words do not begin to describe them or evoke the experience they give rise to. Drumming is especially primitive because it refuses to be stand-offish: its rhythm can be enjoyed only when you join in, and your understanding of it comes from this active experience. It is then that the meaning and sophistication of the rhythm become clear.

There is less trouble in the enjoyment of African sculpture. A sculpture, especially one in a photograph, can be enjoyed detachedly, in private, without having to perform antics; and, of course, it can be talked about afterwards, which goes some way to making it harmless. The eye, when allied to the inquisitive mind, is a discursive organ that can delay things and hold them at arm's length, and if one is not careful this hiatus is filled, not by experience, but with words. The hiatus has indeed often been filled, and African art advanced to the status of an art-form. But the attraction and vitality of this sculpture lie in nothing so tedious as being an art-form: it continues to have influence because it is possessed by demons. This word is not to be understood in a derogatory sense. A demon is a sort of impulse or compulsion with recognisable features. When a sculpture takes the shape of such a compulsion we can see it as an extreme example of that condition where matter, having been possessed by man, possesses him in return. Archetypal magic of this kind can normally only animate a single figure; the effort to compose several figures, the basic nature of our art, is beyond it. This is what one expects from a fetish; it has no charity.

We can experience much African sculpture

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without knowing quite what it is about, quite who the demons are, since it can be experienced immediately as well as discursively. The immediate experience is naturally the one that has had most influence, and in this large and expensive book* we are offered a hundred and eighty-six plates where a variety of magic-making objects may again have their effects on us. The reproductions are good: so "good," often, that they remove the trivial qualities many primitive objects possess, the rude, unfinished look that a photograph can hardly avoid licking over with its specious bias of fixed light and shade, and its agreeable cheat of details and enlargements. The immediate experience of this sculpture is, and long has been effective: European art has been effectively demonised by it, at a time when our own demons had apparently lost their faces.

**African Folk-tales and Sculpture.* Edited, and with introductions by Paul Radin and James Johnson Sweeney. Bollingen series. Secker and Warburg. 63s.

THE primitive, of course, controls his demons largely through ritual which can both evoke and propitiate them. They are also controlled by what is known about them: each demon has, as it were, a body made up of myths, superstitions, portents, and all the occasions when he has acted in the world. This limits his powers so that, in spite of being an impulse with a face, he does not appear casually: he has a meaning which depends on his being properly related to men and to other demons.

It is through this meaning, this body of action and knowledge, that we may understand the demon discursively. Now there are, in the first part of this book, eighty-one folk tales which might well have helped to provide such a discursive explanation, and the sad thing is that Dr. Radin, their editor, never attempts to relate them to the nice pictures in the second half. Where is that "interrelation of ideas leading to a synthesis of knowledge" to which this book should, according to the blurb, contribute?

The tales come from all over Africa: Xosa next to Nuer, Nama next to Ashanti. The effect of this composite mythology is bewildering. Not only are the Ashanti tales with their wit and lucidity quite different from the curiously opaque and concentrated Bushmen stories or the comfortable *Märchen*-type Hausa tale; but, juxtaposed under headings so general as to be meaningless, they can hardly be read as anything but novelettes. This is Dr. Radin's intention, for when he says that "African literature constitutes a single unit" he is considering not its meaning but its stylistic elements: he sees these folk-tales as examples of art-forms and no longer as myths. "The subject matter of myths and folktales is not determined by the psyche of a people, as has so frequently been contended directly or indirectly by so many social theorists. There is no such psyche. . . . What matters is not whether a particular poem-song or prose narrative has practical functions or a magical setting, or what the nature of its subject is, but whether an artist has worked on it."

The reader has therefore a lot of Art to get through as best he can, together with often puzzling ethnological details, with little help from the editor. However, the main intention of the anthology, which is "to correct the erroneous impression, still widely current, that native African folk-literature is mainly animal

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tales and to bring home the fact that it is possibly the most sophisticated and realistic of all aboriginal literatures"—this intention, for what it's worth, is accomplished. The sophistication is easily enjoyed, as in the story of the Sky God who, lying on top of Mother Earth, is continually knocked by an old woman's pestle, gets the smoke of the fire in his eyes, and is used as a towel by people wiping their dirty hands on him. Here and there one recognises other common mythological themes, such as the Persephone, captured by an army of new-born children—"a red army with the umbilical cords still hanging on"—who disappear into the ground on being made to pound kaffir corn in a mortar; or Ugungqu-kubantwana, a Great Mother, the water from whose pool you can hardly stop drinking, it tastes so nice. Many other tales are Strewel-Peterish, and one almost expects a Victorian moral at the end. The sense of detail and realism which they show is perhaps a sign of the familarity with which the African treats his gods and spirits. They are so closely related to the world that much of what happens there is an ordinary aspect of their action: man is made responsible by them. It is this, as much as any cynicism or use of literary devices, that makes these tales stark-real; though it may be difficult, in this luxurious book, to know quite what this reality is.

Francis Huxley

JOB AND THE UNCONSCIOUS

ONLY the Jews can ever hope to understand Jahweh, but for two thousand years they have had to watch, in silence, Christians of all kinds attempting to do so. There is a sublimity even about Kafka's ridiculous, inconsistent, and unfathomable Castle that is somehow wanting in Dr. Jung's analysis * of the God-image (he does not go so far as to claim that he is actually analysing the Unfathomable itself), the tone of which varies between resentment of what the Freudians would call a bad father-imago, and a suave condescension that at times almost seems to turn the tables on God. It is Dr. Jung's misfortune that, in England, he has been forestalled by William Blake, and that Blake's Job engravings, his psychological interpretations of Satan and Jesus, and his attack upon the moral law based on a duality of good and evil, are almost as firmly enrooted in our national thought as the figure of Hamlet. Had one read Jung without knowing Blake, one might have been more impressed by what is, after all, a bold and original essay upon a great theme. Yet it must be said that this is not the best among Dr. Jung's writings, nor best among the existing interpretations of the Book of Job.

Dr. Jung's version of the Job story is as follows: Jahweh, an amoral being characterised by an inconsistency made possible by his unconsciousness of his own omniscience, is caught on his weak side by his son Satan, a personification of his own doubt. He projects upon innocent Job all his uncertainty about his own goodness, justice, and moral rectitude, desisting when the storm is spent, but leaving Job in a position of moral superiority to his God. Jahweh, made aware of Job's moral superiority, forms a desire to attain a similar moral eminence by becoming, himself, man.

Blake's version is very different. God gives Job into the power of Satan, who is the human selfhood (Jung's ego) characterised by man's rational and moralistic nature. It is this satanic selfhood that is responsible for the Mosaic Ten Commandments, and the morality of Good and Evil according to whose laws Job seeks to justify himself. Job's mistake is self-righteousness; and precisely when he stops seeking to justify himself, he is rewarded by a vision of the divine order as it exists beyond the narrow concepts of the satanic morality. This vision comes to all those, and only to those, who have achieved what Blake calls "self-annihilation." The divine decision to become incarnate as man is, in Blake's reading of the myth, not through a desire to emulate the moral rectitude of Job, but through a merciful intention of abolishing Satan's hold over man, the morality of good and evil, by an infusion of the divine spirit of

* *Answer to Job.* By C. G. JUNG. Routledge and Kegan Paul. 12s. 6d.

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imagination. Jesus, or the imagination, comes to "save Satan," the ego—or, at all events, to save man from Satan's power. The Son is like the Father in being at one with himself, transcending duality and its moral conflicts. He flouts the Ten Commandments, for "Jesus was all virtue, and acted from impulse, not from rules." For Blake, man in the temporal world is a fallen being whose consciousness is, relative to eternity, a "deadly sleep"—in other words, unconsciousness—of his higher faculties (this Blake derived from the Neoplatonists). For Jung, it is God who is "unconscious," relative to man's consciousness. Jung, in fact, takes an evolutionary view of consciousness, and argues without the Fall of Man.

Blake's version seems, one might almost say, more Jungian than that of Dr. Jung himself; for Blake attributes to the archetypal world, which through the imagination (Jesus) seeks to penetrate the darkness of the restricted consciousness of the ego, a far greater value than does Dr. Jung, with his half-formed divine consciousness. And yet it is the great Jungian contribution to psychology to have pointed out the reality and value of the archetypal world, as against the Freudian view that the unconscious contains nothing very good. Strange, too, that Dr. Jung should range himself on the side of a morality of duality and conflict, and not on the transcendent divine harmony in which all opposites are reconciled "in Jesus." Nor does he distinguish between fear of God, in the sense of terror of the bad father-imago; and fear in the sense of awe, an experience recorded by all those who, like Arjuna in the *Baghavad Gita*, or Job, have seen the cosmic vision that Dr. Jung, incredibly, takes as yet another piece of moral intimidation on the part of Jahweh. In fact, its effect upon Job was quite the opposite, as it was on Arjuna, and is on all who have glimpsed its glory. Upon those who have fallen in awe before a vision of the greatness and holiness of the divine being, the effect is cathartic and brings a sublime resolution of all human doubts and sorrows, as it did to Job.

Blake's identification of Satan with the moral and righteous ego, and Jesus with the limitless world of divinity that dwells in man as the imagination, clarifies his whole mythology in a way that Jung's reading never seems to achieve. Having failed to see that Job is called upon to renounce that very moral rectitude that, according to Dr. Jung, impresses Jahweh so much, Dr. Jung sees the intention of the incarnation in the light of a moral reformation of God. Jesus incarnates only the "good" side of God. It is true that Christendom has made the figure of Jesus odious by presenting him as one-half of the duality of good and evil rather than as the resolution of quality in a higher unity. The very symbol of the cross, as duality resolved and transcended, bears witness against this Sunday-school picture of the Son of God. Now God's evil nature, Dr. Jung argues,

> *. . . its hour come round at last,*
> *Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born.*

ON THE present symbolic situation, Dr. Jung speaks with the authority and conviction of his professional insight into the mind of an age whose great longing is for some new heavenly marriage that shall produce a new divine child to save us from impending apocalypse. No one to whom mythological thought means anything can fail to recognise the strength of the arguments with which he defends the recent dogma of the Assumption of the Virgin. Yet, in his reading of the Apocalypse of St. John, I would very strongly question the complete validity of an analysis that assumes that such visions are products of the unconscious, in the same sense as the dreams of neurotic patients, or even of sane normal people. This criticism I base on both the assertions and the practice of England's one visionary, William Blake, who questioned the same view, as put forward by Plato, that "poets do not know or understand what they write and utter. This is a most pernicious falsehood. If they do not, pray is an inferior kind to be called knowing?"—that is, the rational knowing of the ego-consciousness. Visionaries are consciously aware, during the visionary state, of things normally closed off from human consciousness; and while it is doubtless true that the context of their visions belongs to that order of reality which Jung describes as the collective unconscious the fact that they experience these things consciously makes what is for neurotics or normal people a relatively inaccessible world, for prophets a branch of knowledge is communicable in a traditional, not a private, symbolic language. This distinction Jung disregards. This prophetic language only becomes dead when visionaries cease to see visions, and the traditional symbols

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lose their significance in a society to whom the areas of experience within which they have an application, are closed. I would venture the guess that nearly the whole of the symbolism of the Apocalypse is traditional, and not a product of the unconscious. A great deal of it is obviously in the same tradition as that of Ezekiel, a fact that has surely never been questioned. Other elements seem to be Greco-Roman, and it is inconceivable that in the second century A.D. the woman clothed with the sun should not be recognised as one of the mediterranean goddesses whose symbolic attributes were known to everybody—perhaps Persephone, mother of Dionysus (a child born in Hades but fathered by Zeus), who is described by Claudian as wearing a garment embroidered with the sun and moon. This seems to be a field in which analogy with clinical analysis of dream symbols can be no less misleading than it is, undoubtedly, revealing. But analogy is one thing, identity another. I am prepared to say, on clear evidence, that Blake, in recording similar visions, was quite consciously and deliberately using a highly eclectic, but nevertheless traditional, symbolic language, whose horrific images that seem like dream-work, are in almost every case traceable to Ovid's Metamorphoses, or Cornelius Agrippa, or the Eddas, or some such relatively prosaic source. The Jungian approach to literary criticism (and the analysis of apocalyptic writings comes within this category) can be most misleading if this elementary fact of scholarship is overlooked.

Kathleen Raine

Other Books

Young Törless. By ROBERT MUSIL. Translated by Eithne Wilkins and Ernst Kaiser. With a Preface by Alan Pryce-Jones. Secker and Warburg. 12s. 6d.

THIS book is a bombshell. What the repercussions were like when it first exploded in Germany half a century ago is something which Mr. Alan Pryce-Jones omits to mention in his otherwise informative and amusing preface. That *Young Törless* went off without a bang in the Berlin of 1906 would seem unlikely.

The novel was Robert Musil's first work, published when he was 24. On the surface it deals with a shocking state of affairs in a nameless, semi-military school for "the sons of the best families" somewhere in Bohemia. From the start, as Mr. Pryce-Jones says, we know "we are in for a bout of adolescent *Angst*." It is the *Angst* of a world, however, which could have no place in the nightmares of an English adolescent. "W" is a school whose physical details are not described, where masters are conspicuous by their absence, boys talk like philosophers and behave like seasoned members of the Gestapo. "We could give him a flogging and make him sing psalms of thanksgiving at the same time," suggests one young thug to another (bully is far too mild a word) as the couple discuss how they intend to torture their victim. Or, he adds, we could "hand him right over to the class to deal with . . . I have a liking for these mass movements"—thus permitting the book's publishers to assert, undeniably with some justification, that *Young Törless* "gains interest today by its microcosmic prefiguration of the Nazi world." It is a world whose sinister aspect, and its theme of the abuse of power, have been seen before in the works of Musil's contemporary, Franz Kafka. Moreover, although utterly lacking in humour, *Young Törless* is lit up with images that might conceivably have come from the author of *The Castle*. Awake at night in the dormitory, for example, "the quarters of the hours crept away [for Törless] like nurses tip-toeing from a sick-bed."

The story contains four main characters—the perplexed, introspective Törless himself, his friends Reiting (who "venerates Napoleon") and Beineberg—that ruthless pair who, when Törless attempts to resist their power, turn savagely against him—and Bassini, the weak, cringing, effeminate youth who sets the grizzly tale rolling by stealing some money which he cannot repay. Much of the book's action occurs at night in secret in an unused, airless attic, a place the reader soon begins to think of as no less grim than a chamber of horrors. It is first the apparently riskless ease with which, night after night, the four boys leave their dormitory to reach this room, and then the enormity of the offences committed there, which will probably put a strain on the credulity of the English reader. Does one not associate semi-military schools in whatever country with some form of discipline, with a staff, part of

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whose business it is to see that boys are at least in their beds, if not asleep, at night? And would not a single beak, however Bohemian, notice a boy's body covered from face to foot in weals? Were *Young Törless* a Kafkaesque fable about some imaginary institution, such questions might not arise. Mr. Pryce-Jones, however, begs the reader to "remember" that Musil's "W" was in reality "a very consequential school—a kind of Eton, or perhaps . . . a Wellington, perched away on the Polish frontier of the Austro-Hungarian Empire."

Perched anywhere at any time, even in the atomic age, this first book by the author of *The Man Without Qualities* still remains a bomb.

James Stern

The Poetic Drama of Paul Claudel. By JOSEPH CHIARI. The Harvill Press. 15s.

THIS closely-argued study of Claudel's plays is the more valuable because it avoids the uncritical adulation of the Catholic commentators. Most English readers find Claudel quite unbearable most of the time, however willingly they surrender themselves to his occasional splendours; and the poetic dramas, with their stage properties out of Gustave Moreau and their theological presuppositions which appear the more dubious the more inhuman they become, only reach us across a stubborn barrier of distaste. Dr. Chiari wins our confidence because he shares our reserves. He refuses to be bullied; when he sees Claudel's faults he examines them with penetration, and it is not every critic who can stand up to the poet's bludgeoning ways. We are therefore prepared to listen to his advocacy that Claudel is the most accomplished writer of French poetic drama since Racine. As his only rival seems to be Victor Hugo, such a verdict is not insuperably difficult to accept.

It is impossible to appraise Claudel's drama without considering his theology and his doctrine of Romantic Love, for it is in the conflict between these two that the plays achieve their dramatic tension. Claudel has always suffered from the necessity of bringing Tristan and Iseult to heaven without destroying his whole theological synthesis. "The one unavoidable inference which one is compelled to draw from Claudel's work," writes Dr. Chiari, "is that God cannot accept the absolute happiness of two human beings because that complete happiness would exclude Him." But if they are predestined to that happiness, what then? Claudel, involving his God in contradiction and wilfulness, can yet rise to great poetic power in his dramatic creations. It is Dr. Chiari's critical skill which is able to show us the heights from the surrounding marshes.

H. G. Whiteman

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